THE TREE OF LIFE

Genesis 2:9, 3:22-24, in Jewish, Gnostic and early Christian texts.

by

Arnold G. Levin

Summary of the Thesis

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I. The Myth of the Tree of Life.

The present study does not attempt to solve the complex problem of the origin and role of the tree of life in the ancient Near East or its occurrence in widely different cultures and periods. The aim of the thesis is to investigate the history of interpretation of Genesis 2:9, 3:22-24, in Jewish, Gnostic and early Christian literature of the Hellenistic and Roman periods (up to ca. 200 A.D.), and specifically, to examine the theological factors which have entered into the reinterpretation of the tree of life and have shaped its history.

The references to the tree of life in Genesis 2-3 presuppose a tree of life myth which Israel has received from Near Eastern mythology. However, literary and archaeological materials provide no evidence that the tree of life was a religious and mythical symbol of primary importance in the ancient Near East. Positive evidence for a mythical tree of life is limited to tomb reliefs and sepulchral art which presuppose such a concept and the similar notion of a plant of life which rejuvenates.

In the Genesis account of paradise the tree of life has a minor role and is not important to the main narrative. The tree of life enters into the narrative in Gen. 3:22 only as a false substitute for the broken relationship of dependence and obedience. But

if Genesis 2-3 presents the tree of life in a negative role where its mythological colors are "faded," Ezekiel 47:12 and LXX Isaiah 65:22 demonstrate that the myth of the paradise tree of life could be revived and put to a new use.

II. The Jewish Eschatological Interpretation.

There is one distinctive interpretation of the Genesis tree of life in Jewish apocalyptic and midrashic writings: the tree of life is an eschatological tree of immortality which is reserved for the righteous in the new age. In Jewish apocalyptic and midrashic literature the tree of life is given a new prominence and a new eschatological role which is marked by a resurgence of the more mythological dimension of the tree. Mythological elements which have have been revived are the following: 1) the eating of the fruit of the tree of life; 2) the fragrance of the tree; 3) the association of the tree with the oil of anointing; 4) the tree as a source of healing and rejuvenation.

The more Gnostic aspect that eating from the tree of life is a present possibility occurs in the targumic identification of the law with the fruit of the tree of life and in the Hodayot interpretation of the eternal planting.

The understanding of Israel as Yahweh's chosen and elect people is a theological presupposition which has entered into Jewish

exposition of Genesis 2-3 and has helped produce a distinctive Jewish interpretation of the Genesis tree of life.

III. Philo of Alexandria: The Tree of Virtue.

The history of interpretation of Genesis 2:9 enters a new phase with the allegorical interpretation of Philo. His interpretation differs from that of both Jewish apocalyptic circles and Gnostic interpreters in its ethical content. Philo interprets the tree of life and the tree of knowledge as symbols of the two opposite directions of life which man must choose between. The tree of life is the path of virtue with life and immortality as its end. Philo also used the tree of life as a symbol of the "heavenly man" and as a symbol of earthly man's mystical ascent to perfect virtue.

While Philo lists several variant literal and allegorical interpretations of the tree of life, he categorically rejected the possibility that a tree of life ever existed on earth or would exist in the future. But if his rejection of eschatology is disregarded there are several features of his interpretation which are parallel to the Jewish eschatological interpretation. Factors which contribute to the apparent continuity between the Philonic and Gnostic interpretations are a similar allegorical method of exegesis and a new non-eschatological mysticism.

IV. Nag-Hammadi: The Gnostic Tree of Life.

In Gnostic literature from Nag-Hammadi there are several variant interpretations of the two paradise trees. The tree of life remains a symbol of immortality, the goal sought by the Gnostic, but in one striking passage in the Apocryphon of John it is interpreted as a symbol of deceit and death. The new feature in the Gnostic interpretation of Genesis 2:9 is the reinterpretation of the tree of knowledge as a symbol of the Gnostic revealer and of the saving revelation. Gnostic interpreters of Genesis 2-3 made the tree of knowledge as important a symbol of salvation as the cross.

Parallels to this Gnostic interpretation of the paradise account occur in the writings of Clement of Alexandria and Origen as well as in the fragment of Justin's Book of Baruch preserved by Hippolytus. A positive interpretation of the tree of knowledge occurs in Jewish and Christian literature, but it is only in Gnostic literature that it becomes a symbol of the heavenly revealer. Other evidence helps to show that Gnostic interpreters of Genesis 2-3 drew on existing Jewish exegetical traditions for their interpretation of the paradise account.

V. New Testament ---Apostolic Fathers.

In the Apocalypse of John the tree of life is interpreted as a symbol of immortality, the reward promised to the saints in the

new age. This interpretation follows the traditional Jewish interpretation of the tree of life, but the author's own emphasis is apparent in the qualifications that he lists. He limits the right to the tree of life to those who maintain righteous conduct and who remain faithful to Christ. The main features of his vision of the tree of life in Rev. 22:1f are drawn from Ezekiel 47 but are now reinterpreted and combined with other traditions (cf. Gen. 2:9).

In John 15 there is a question of the source of the Evangelist's vine imagery. As an ecclesiological symbol the vine metaphor of John 15 has parallels with Old Testament texts like Psalm 80 and Isaiah 5:1ff, but as a vine of life, a symbol of the unity of Jesus with the disciples, the vine metaphor has parallels with the Gnostic interpretation of the tree of life. It is improbable that the vine imagery goes back directly to the myth of the tree of life, but the vine metaphor is analogous to Gnostic use of the tree of life and can be equated with it.

In Trall. 11 Ignatius has consciously subsumed the cross under the imagery of the tree of life in order to contradict Gnostic speculation concerning the cross and in order to protect the right understanding of the church.

VI. Myth and Scripture: Conclusions.

There is a continuity between the various interpretations of the tree of life in Jewish, Gnostic and Christian writings which

can be explained in part by dependence on a Jewish exegetical tradition.

Polemical concerns enter into the use of the tree of life in Jewish, Gnostic and Christian writings, but there is no evidence that polemical factors played a major role in the formation of the various interpretations of the Genesis tree of life.

The striking mythological colors of the tree of life are not apparent from the Old Testament usage in Genesis or Proverbs, nor from the few references to the tree of life in the New Testament. The tree of life appears in its more striking and more mythological form in Jewish apocalyptic and midrashic works, Gnostic literature, and in later Christian literature.

The cultic role of the tree of life does not appear in the Biblical references, but becomes a factor in Gnostic and later Christian traditions (e.g. in connection with the Eucharist).

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THESIS ACCEPTANCE CERTIFICATE

The undersigned, appointed by the Committee on Higher Degrees, have examined a thesis entitled:

"The Tree of Life: Genesis 2:9, 3:22-24, in Jewish, Gnostic and Early Christian Texts"

presented by Arnold Gunnar Levin, candidate for the degree of Doctor of Theology, and hereby certify that it is worthy of acceptance.

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Gnostic and early Christian texts.

A thesis presented

by

Arnold Gunnar Levin

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Ancient Literature: Abbreviations and Editions.

Biblical

MT	Masoretic Text. Biblica-Hebraica, ed. by R. Kittel et al. Stuttgart, 1958[1].
LXX	Septuagint.
Brooke-McLean	The Old Testament in Greek I:1: Genesis, ed. by A.E. Brooke and N. McLean. Cambridge, 1906.
Rahlfs	I. Genesis, ed. by A. Rahlfs. Stuttgart, 1926. X. Psalmi cum Odis, ed. by A. Rahlfs. Goettingen, 1931.
Ziegler	XIV. Isaias, ed. by J. Ziegler. Goettingen, 1939. XVI:I. Ezechiel, ed. by J. Ziegler. Goettingen, 1952.
Hatch-Redpath	A Concordance to the Septuagint and the Other Greek Versions of the Old Testament, ed. by E. Hatch and H.A. Redpath. Oxford, 1892-1906.

Jewish Literature: Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Josephus, and Qumran literature.

Charles	The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, ed. by R.H. Charles. Oxford, 1913. I & II.
Kautzsch	Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments, ed. by E. Kautzsch. Tuebingen, 1900. II.
Apoc Abr	The Apocalypse of Abraham, ed. by G.H. Box (Transl. of early Documents). London-New York, 1919.
II Baruch	Die Apokalypsen des Esra und des Baruch, ed. by B. Violet. GCS 32. Leipzig, 1924.
Baruch-cycle	The Rest of the Words of Baruch, ed. by J.R. Harris. London, 1889.
I En	The Book of Enoch or I Enoch, ed. by R.H. Charles. Oxford, 1912. Ethiopic Enoch. Das Buch Henoch, ed. by J. Flemming and L. Radermacher. GCS 5. Leipzig, 1901. Greek text of I En. 1:1-32:1.

II En	The Book of the Secrets of Enoch, ed. by W.R. Morfill and R.H. Charles. Oxford, 1896. Le livre des secrets d'Hénoch: texte slave et traduction francaise, ed. by A. Vaillant. Paris 1952.
III En	3. Enoch or the Hebrew Book of Enoch, ed. by H. Odeberg. Cambridge, 1928.
IV Ezra	The Fourth Book of Ezra, ed. by R.L. Bensly with an introduction by M.R. James. Texts and Studies 3:2. Cambridge, 1895. See also Violet's edition of IV Ezra above under II Baruch.
Josephus	Jewish Antiquities. Loeb edition, ed. by H.St. J. Thackeray and R. Marcus. Cambridge, 1930.
Jubilees	The Book of Jubilees or the Little Genesis, ed. by R.H. Charles. London, 1902.
Apoc Moses	Apocalypsis Mosis (Greek text). In Apocalypses Apocryphae, ed. by C. Tischendorf. Lipsiae, 1866.
Odes of Sol	The Odes and Psalms of Solomon, ed. by J.R. Harris. Cambridge, 1909. Re-edited by Harris and A. Mingana; Manchester, 1916-1920.
Ps.-Philo	Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum, ed. by G. Kisch (Publications in Medieval Studies, Un. of Notre Dame). Notre Dame, 1949. The Biblical Antiquities of Philo, transl. by M.R. James (Transl. of early Documents). London, 1917.
Qumran	
CD	The Damascus Document. The Zadokite Documents, ed. by C. Rabin. Oxford, 1954.
1QH	The Thanksgiving Psalms.
1QS	The Manual of Discipline. The Dead Sea Scrolls of the Hebrew University, ed. by E.L. Sukenik. Jerusalem, 1955. Megilloth Midbar Yehuda, ed. by A.M. Habermann. Jerusalem, 1959.
Sib Or	Die Oracula Sibyllina, ed. by J. Geffcken. Leipzig, 1902. GCS 8.

Test XII Patr	The Greek Versions of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, ed. by R.H. Charles. Oxford, 1908.

Rabbinic Literature and the Targums.

T B	The Babylonian Talmud, ed. by I. Epstein (Soncino edition). London, 1935-1952.
Mishnah	Mishnah, transl. by H. Danby. Oxford, 1933.
Gen R	Midrash Rabbah: Genesis, transl. by H. Freedman (Soncino edition). London, 1939. Bereschit Rabba, ed. by T. Albeck. Berlin.
Pesikta	Pesikta: die aelteste Hagada redigirt in Palaestina von Rab Kahana, ed. by S. Buber. Lyck, 1868.
Pirke R Eliezer	Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer, transl. by G. Friedlander. London, 1916.
TO	Targum Onkelos. The Bible in Aramaic, ed. by A. Sperber. Leiden, 1959.
1TJ	Pseudo-Jonathan, ed. by M. Ginsburger. Berlin, 1903.
2TJ	Das Fragmententhargum, ed. by M. Ginsburger. Berlin, 1899.
T Isa	The Targum of Isaiah, ed. by J.F. Stenning. Oxford, 1949.
Etheridge	The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel on the Pentateuch; with the Fragments of the Jerusalem Targum, transl. by J.W. Etheridge. London, 1862.

Philo of Alexandria.

Philo	Philonis Alexandrini Opera Quae Supersunt, I-VII, ed. by L. Cohn and P. Wendland. Berlin, 1896-1930. Index volume by J. Leisegang. Loeb edition by G.H. Whitaker and F.H. Colson, I-X , with supplementary volumes Questions on Genesis and Exodus, transl. by R. Marcus from Armenian. Cambridge, 1929-1962.

Abr	On Abraham.
Cher	On the Cherubim
Fug	On Flight and Finding
Her	Who is the Heir of Divine Things?
LA	Allegorical Interpretation of Genesis 2-3.
Mut	On the Change of Names.
Opif	On the Account of the Creation of the World.
Plant	On Noah's work as a Planter.
QG	Questions and Answers on Genesis.
Somn	On Dreams.

Gnostic Literature: Nag-Hammadi and Mandean Literature.

Nag-Hammadi

AJ	Apocryphon of John
BG	Die Gnostischen Schriften des koptischen Papyrus Berlinensis 8502, ed. by W.C. Till. TU 60. Berlin, 1955.
Krause-Labib	Die drei Versionen des Apocryphon des Johannes im koptischen Museum zu Alt-Kairo. Abhandlungen des Deutschen Archaeologischen Instituts Kairo. Koptische Reihe, Band I. Ed. by M. Krause and P. Labib. Wiesbaden, 1962.
EPh	Das Evangelium nach Philippos, ed. by W.C. Till. Patristische Texte und Studien. Band 2. Berlin, 1963.
ETh	The Gospel according to Thomas, ed. by A. Guillaumont, H.-Ch. Puech, G. Quispel, W. Till and Y.'Abd Al Masih. New York, 1959.
EV	Evangelium Veritatis, ed. by M. Malinine, H.-Ch. Puech, G. Quispel. Zuerich, 1956.
OW	On the Origin of the World. Die koptisch-gnostische Schrift ohne Titel aus Codex II von Nag-Hammadi im koptischen Museum zu Alt-Kairo, ed. by A. Boehlig and P. Labib. Deutsche Akademie der Wissensch. zu Berlin, Institut für Orientforschung N.R. 58. Berlin, 1962.

Leipoldt-Schenke	Koptisch-gnostische Schriften aus den Papyrus-Codices von Nag-Hammadi, ed. by J. Leipoldt, H.-M. Schenke. Hamburg-Bergstedt, 1960.
Schmidt-Till	Koptisch-gnostische Schriften, I, ed. by. C. Schmidt. Leipzig, 1905. = GCS 13 (2nd ed. by W.C.Till. Berlin, 1954 = GCS 45).

Mandean Literature.

Drower	The Canonical Prayerbook of the Mandaeans, transl. by E.S. Drower. Leiden, 1959.
Lidzbar-	Ginza: Der Schatz oder Das grosse Buch der Mandaeer, transl. by M. Lidzbarski. Goettingen-Leipzig, 1925.
	Das Johannesbuch der Mandaeer, ed. by M. Lidzbarski. Giessen, 1915.

Early Christian and Patristic Literature.

Lipsius-Bonnet	Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha I-II, ed. by R.A. Lipsius and M. Bonnet. Leipzig, 1891-1903.
James	The Apocryphal New Testament, ed. by M.R. James. Oxford, 1955.
Cl A Strom	Clement of Alexandria Stromata I-VI (GCS 15, Clemens Alexandrinus II), ed. by O. Staehlin. Leipzig, 1906.
Hipp Ref	Hippolytus Refutatio omnium haeresium (GCS 26, Hippolytus Werke, III), ed. by P. Wendland. Leipzig, 1916.
Ign	Ignatius of Antioch. Text in Die apostolischen Vaeter, ed. by F.X. Funk-K. Bihlmeyer. Tuebingen, 1956^{2}.
Ign Eph	Ignatius to the Ephesians
Magn	To the Magnesians
Phld	To the Philadelphians
Poly	To Polycarp
Ign Rom	Ignatius to the Romans

Smyr	To the Smyrnaeans
Trall	To the Trallians
Iren	Irenaeus
AH	Adv. Haereses, I-II, ed. by W.W. Harvey. Cantabrig., 1857. Irenee de Lyon. Contre les Heresies. Livre III, ed. by F. Sagnard. Paris, 1952.
JM	Justin Martyr. Texts of the Apology and Dialogue in Die aeltesten Apologeten, ed. by E.J. Goodspeed. Goettingen, 1914.
Melito	Papyrus Bodmer, XIII. Homelie sur la Paque; manuscrit du IIIe siecle, ed. by M. Testuz. (Bibliotheca Bodmeriana). Geneva, 1960. The Homily on the Passion by Melito Bishop of Sardis; Studies and Documents XII, ed. by K. Lake and S. Lake. Philadelphia, 1940.
Origen	
Cels	Against Celsus (GCS 2-3, Origen I-II), ed. by P. Koetschau. Leipzig, 1899.
Hom on Josh	Homilies on Joshua (GCS 30, Origen VII), ed. by W. A. Baehrens. Leipzig, 1921.
Princ	On First Principles (GCS 22, Origen V), ed. by P. Koetschau. Leipzig, 1913.
Theoph Ant.	Ad Autolycum, ed. J.C.T. Otto. Jena, 1861.
	The Ante-Nicene Fathers; translations of the writings of the fathers down to A.D. 325, ed. by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. Grand Rapids, 1956^3.

Other Abbreviations.

AJA	The American Journal of Archaeology
AJSLL	The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature
ANEP	The Ancient Near East in Pictures (ed. Pritchard)
ANET	Ancient Near Eastern Texts (ed. by Pritchard)
BA	The Biblical Archaeologist
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research

BR	Biblical Research
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
ET	English Translation
ExpT	The Expository Times
GCS	Die griechische christlichen Schriftsteller
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
IB	The Interpreter's Bible
ICC	The International Critical Commentary
IDB	The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JE	Jewish Encyclopedia
JEH	Journal of Ecclesiastical History
JR	Journal of Religion
JThC	Journal for Theology and the Church
JThS	Journal of Theological Studies
JQR	Jewish Quarterly Review
KJV	King James Version
NEB	New English Bible
NS	New series
PAPS	Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society
PEQ	Palestine Exploration Quarterly
RB	Revue Biblique
RGG	Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SPatr	Studia Patristica
ST	Studia Theologica
TL	Theologische Literaturzeitung
TWNT	Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
UUÅ	Uppsala Un. Årsskrift
ZAW	Zeitschrift f. die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZNW	Zeitschrift f. die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZTK	Zeitschrift f. Theologie und Kirche

The Myth of the Tree of Life
Introduction

Since the rise of the comparative study of religion, the tree of life has been the subject of extensive research and discussion. Zofja Ameisenowa lists twelve major studies on the tree of life published during the period from 1921 to 1938 alone.[1] The twelve essays and monographs which she cites are typical of published research on the tree of life. Primary attention has been devoted to an examination of the origin and role of the tree of life in the ancient Near East and its occurrence in Islamic, Oriental and Indo-European cultures.[2] The chief treatment of this comparative religions material is the elaborate but unscientific study by Hendrik Bergema which brings together Biblical texts with extensive parallels from the ancient Near East.[3]

In spite of these studies the origin of the tree of life and its role in the ancient Near East remains obscure. The various hypotheses proposed on the basis of literary and archaeological materials have not been conclusively proven. A.J. Wensinck drew the conclusion that the

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[1] Z. Ameisenowa, "The Tree of Life in Jewish Iconography," Journal of the Warburg Institute, 2 (1939), 326-345. See the extensive bibliographic note on 326f where a brief review of the works cited is included.

[2] See N. Perrot, "Les representations de l"arbre sacre sur les monuments de Mesopotamie et d'Elam," Babylonica, 17 (1937), 5-143.

[3] H. Bergema, De Boom des Levens in Schrift en Historie (Hilversum, 1938), 1-681. Geo Widengren has criticized the work as a raw collection of heterogeneous stuff which has been handled with lack of a scientific attitude. G. Widengren, "The King and the Tree of Life in the Ancient Near East Religion," UUÅ, 4 (1951), 5.

tree of life was in fact a tree of light, a cosmological symbol which represents the East.[1] The Scandinavian Myth and Ritual School, in particular Ivan Engnell and Geo Widengren, presented the view that the tree of life had an important function in the ancient Near East as a cultic symbol of the king.[2] But the evidence presented in support of these hypotheses is not convincing.[3] The assumption that the tree of life was a religious and mythical symbol of primary importance in the ancient Near East has not been established.[4]

In his studies on Jewish symbolism E.R. Goodenough brought together a useful collection of archaeological and comparative material on the conception of a sacred tree or tree of life in the ancient Near East including tomb reliefs from Egypt and the art work on the central panel of the synagogue at Dura-Europos.[5] But Goodenough's survey and

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[1] A.J. Wensinck, "Tree and Bird as Cosmological Symbols in Western Asia," Verhandelingen der koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam, 22 (1921), 3ff.

[2] Ivan Engnell, Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East (Upsala, 1943), 25ff; Geo Widengren, "The King and the Tree of Life in the Ancient Near East Religion," 5-59.

[3] S. Mowinckel criticizes Engnell for reading the identification of the king and the tree of life into the texts and argues that the hypothesis is unsupported by convincing evidence. S. Mowinckel, He That Cometh (New York, 1954), 453ff, notes 4 & 6.

[4] For a review of Sumerian, Babylonian-Assyrian, and Phoenician material from a critical viewpoint, see Th. C. Vriezen, Onderzoek naar de Paradijsvoorstelling bij de oude semietische Volken (Wageningen, 1937), 22-118 (The principal results of the work are summarized in German, 234-243). Vriezen concludes that no actual tree of life has been found though there are very similar notions, e.g. the plant of life.

[5] See E.R. Goodenough, Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period (New York, 1958), VII, 87-134; IX (1964), 79ff; XI, figs. 73ff; cf. idem, "Judaism at Dura-Europos," IEJ, 11 (1961), 161-170.

collection of material adds little to the older discussions. Such a collection presupposes uncritically that the various stylized tree, plant and vine designs are all related and demonstrate the conception of a sacred tree or tree of life.

The present study does not attempt to solve the complex problem of the origin and role of the tree of life in the ancient Near East. A brief review of the evidence for the conception of a tree of life will be presented in the next section, but this does not presume to be an exhaustive survey. The evidence considered is predominately negative. Tomb paintings and other sepulchral art, e.g. in Egypt, have been frequently referred to as evidence for a tree of life in the ancient Near East, but this material is difficult to interpret. Many of the paintings and designs are merely decorative and provide no evidence whatsoever of a tree of life.

The occurrence of the myth of the tree of life in widely different cultures and periods is also problematic. No attempt will be made in the present study to examine this problem except as it bears on the question of how the myth of the tree of life passed into early Christian literature. Zofja Ameisenowa drew the conclusion that the tree of life as an eschatological symbol of paradise must have reached early Christianity through Jewish sepulchral art of late Hellenistic times.[1] But the archaeological evidence is not conclusive and the

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[1] Z. Ameisenowa, "The Tree of Life in Jewish Iconography," 328.

more obvious role of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic is overlooked.

While several studies have examined the use of the tree of life motif in Christian art and iconography and the references to the tree of life in Christian literature,[1] there has been no attempt to thoroughly examine the use and interpretation of the tree of life in Jewish, Gnostic and early Christian texts from the point of view of their use of the paradise account of Genesis. The most significant of recent studies on Jewish and Christian use of the tree of life is found in Jean Daniélou's general survey of early Christian symbols.[2] In the essay "The Vine and the Tree of Life" Daniélou brings together a striking collection of references related to the imagery of planting, vine and tree of life. His general conclusion is determined by his methodology in comparing texts:"From the Hodayoth of Qumran on, and from Ignatius of Antioch on, we find one metaphor passing into another".[3] Such a conclusion results from the grouping of texts in the same way that Goodenough has grouped pictorial and artistic evidence for a sacred tree. Without proper criteria all references to planting, vine

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[1] See Esther C. Quinn, The Quest of Seth for the Oil of Life (Chicago, 1962), 1-187; E.S. Greenhill, "The Child in the Tree; a study of the Cosmological Tree in Christian Tradition," Traditio, 10 (1954), 323-371; and W.L. Hildburgh, "On Palm Tree Crosses," Archaeologia, 81 (1931), 49-61.

[2] Jean Daniélou, Les Symboles chrétiens primitifs (Paris, 1961), 33-48; translated as Primitive Christian Symbols (Baltimore, 1964), 24-41.

[3] Ibid., 40.

and tree of life appear related.[1]

What are the theological factors which brought about the revival of the symbol of the tree of life in Jewish apocalyptic literature? What role does the Genesis account of paradise and the tree of life play in the revival of the myth of the tree of life? What role does the Genesis tree of life play in the Gnostic speculations on paradise and its trees? How is Gnostic speculation on paradise related, if at all, with the Christian interpretation of the tree of life?

The aim of the following study is to investigate the history of interpretation of Genesis 2:9, 3:22-24, in Jewish, Gnostic, and early Christian literature of the Hellenistic and Roman periods (up to ca. 200 A.D.), and specifically, to examine the theological factors which have entered into the reinterpretation of the tree of life and have shaped its history.

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[1] Patristic exegesis of the New Testament tended to connect every tree with paradise; see Irenaeus AH 5.10, where Paul's figure of the wild olive shoot is interpreted as a paradise tree. See also J. Daniélou, Primitive Christian Symbols, 30ff.

Mythological Background.

The references to the tree of life in Genesis 2-3 presuppose a tree of life myth which Israel has received from Near Eastern mythology. The myth of the tree of life may have been transmitted directly from N. Mesopotamia by the Hebrew ancestors during the Middle Bronze Age or mediated through Canaanite culture,[1] but present evidence is too scanty for any definite conclusion. While the myth of the tree of life can be demonstrated from existing materials in only a rough form, if at all, a brief review of the literary and archaeological evidence may help clarify possible misconceptions.

The kiškanû tree at Eridu has been frequently cited as one of the prime pieces of literary evidence for the existence of a tree of life in Sumerian mythology.[2] The Sumerian text (with Akkadian interlinear translation) is an incantation text, one of a series, which traces the holy power and origins of an ingredient used in a ritual or incantation.

> In Eridu in a pure place the dark kiškanû grows; Its aspect is like lapis lazuli branching out from the apsû. In the place where Ea holds sway, in Eridu full of abundance . . . In his pure house is a grove, shadow-extending, into whose midst no man has entered; there

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[1] B.S. Childs, "Tree of Knowledge, Tree of Life," IDB (New York, 1962), IV, 695; see W.F. Albright, "The Role of the Canaanites in the History of Civilization," The Bible and the Ancient Near East, ed. by G.E. Wright (New York, 1961), 328-362.

[2] See Widengren, "The King and the Tree of Life," 6. M. Eliade takes the kiškanû out of context and interprets it as a cosmological tree, a prototype of the Babylonian "sacred tree." M. Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion (New York, 1958), 272.

> are Šamaš and Tammuz. Between the mouths of the two rivers are the gods Kahegal and Igihegal, the [genii of Eridu] That kiškanû one has gathered; over the man the incantation of the apsu he has recited; upon the head of the man possessed he shall place (it).[1]

The text locates the kiškanû at Eridu and describes it in terms of a cult tree with precious stones, but it does not function as a tree of immortality. The magical powers of the kiškanû are used to expell the demons of the man possessed. In other such incantation texts "salt," "water," "junipers," and "cedars," are used as the special ingredient of the ritual.

There is a passage in the Sumerian myth of Inanna's descent to the nether world in which the dead Inanna is revived by the "water of life" and either the "food" or "plant" of life. According to the story the goddess Inanna (Akkadian Ishtar) instructs her messenger Ninshubur that if she does not return from the nether world after three days, he is to go to Eridu, the city of Enki:

> Father Enki, the Lord of Wisdom, who knows the "food of life" (ú-nam-ti-la), who knows the "water of life" (a-nam-ti-la), he will surely bring me to life (lines 65-67).[2]

In the nether world Inanna is put to death by the seven dreaded judges and is impaled on a stake, but her messenger goes to Enki and a plan is devised whereby she can be revived. The incantation is

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[1] For transliteration and translation, see W.F. Albright, "The Mouth of the Rivers," AJSLL, 35 (1919), 164.

[2] For transliteration and translation, see S.N. Kramer, "Sumerian Literature; A Preliminary Survey of the Oldest Literature in the World," PAPS, 85 (1942), 297, 307.

to be given over her body:

> Sixty times the "food of life" (ú-nam-ti-la), sixty times the "water of life" (a-nam-ti-la), sprinkle upon it. Surely, Inanna will arise (lines 244-245).[1]

Inanna is revived by sprinkling the two ingredients, ú-nam-ti-la and a-nam-ti-la, on her body. The word ú can mean: 1) plant, vegetable, or, 2) food.[2] As Kramer has rightly noted, the parallelism with "water of life" suggests the translation "food of life" rather than "plant of life."[3]

Positive literary evidence for the existence of a plant of life occurs in the Akkadian version of the Epic of Gilgamesh.[4] In the Akkadian epic Gilgamesh sets out on a quest for eternal life following the death of his beloved friend Enkidu. He sets out in search of Utnapishtim, the Babylonian Noah, who lives beyond the waters of death. There is no indication that the place where Utnapishtim lives is conceived of as an "earthly paradise." Utnapishtim tells Gilgamesh of the plant of life as a favor, just as Gilgamesh is preparing to sail for home.

The plant of life in the Gilgamesh Epic rejuvenates, but does not bestow eternal life. It is described as a secret thing of the gods,

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1 Translation by S.N. Kramer, "Sumerian Literature," 301, 310.

2 Note from Thorkild Jacobsen.

3 For discussion of the text and argument in favor of the translation "plant of life" , see Widengren, "The King and the Tree of Life," 33ff.

4 ANET, 96, lines 266-289.

thorny like a rose, and growing at the bottom of the ocean.[1] The plant restores lost youth to the person who eats it:

> Gilgamesh says to him, to Urshanabi, the boatman: "Urshanabi, this plant is a plant apart, whereby a man may regain his life's breath. I will take it to ramparted Uruk, will cause people to eat the plant . . . Its name shall be 'Man Becomes Young in Old Age.' I myself shall eat (it) and thus return to the state of my youth."[2]

Gilgamesh gains possession of the plant but later leaves it unattended while he bathes. A serpent smells its fragrance and carries it off. Thus, Gilgamesh obtains the plant of life but then loses it and the opportunity of rejuvenation.

The underground garden of trees bearing precious stones which Gilgamesh passes through on his journey to Utnapishtim is a traveller's wonder, not a paradise garden.[3] There is a parallel between the description of the vine centerpiece as "fair to behold" and "dazzling to see" and the Genesis description of the trees of paradise (Gen. 2:9, 3:6; cf. I En. 24:5), but there is no evidence that the trees of the Gilgamesh Epic have any life-giving function or any connection with the tree of life.[4]

The Akkadian Adapa myth, like the Gilgamesh Epic, is an aetiology which explains why man has failed to attain immortality. In the

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1 ANET, lines 266-269.

2 ANET, 96, lines 277-283.

3 ANET, 89, lines 48ff.

4 For an interpretation of the tree-vine as a cosmological tree of life, see A.J. Wensinck, "Tree and Bird as Cosmological Symbols in Western Asia," 3.

Akkadian account Adapa goes to heaven to see the god Anu.[1] At the gate of heaven the gods Tammuz and Gizzida offer him bread and water, heavenly elements which are the food and drink of immortality. But he had been told by the god Ea who did not want to loose his faithful servant that these are the bread and water of death and thus refuses to accept them. Anu informs Adapa that he has refused the bread and water of life and has in fact lost the opportunity for eternal life. The Adapa myth presents the idea that eternal life can be possessed through eating of a material substance, but in this case the bread and water of life bestow immortality as heavenly elements.

The plant of life is referred to in a letter to the king of Assyria which has been cited as illustrating the relationship of the plant or tree of life to the sacral king.

> To the king, our Lord, thy servants Belikbi and the inhabitants of Bambulu (write), Ninurta and Gula command peace, happiness, and health of the king, our Lord forever. Dead dogs are we, but the king (our) Lord had made us live, offering the plant of life to our nostrils.[2]

The reference to the plant of life as part of a traditional greeting and salutation to the king may be simply a metaphor used to designate his power or lordship. Widengren has emphasized that the passage must be understood concretely, i.e. that the king, holding as his sceptre the twig from the tree of life, stretches this rod or shoot

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1 ANET, 101f.

2 See R.F. Harper, Assyrian and Babylonian Letters, No. 771, 1-7; cited by Langdon, The Mythology of all Races: Semitic (Boston, 1931), V, 187.

towards the kneeling suppliants.[1] But the identification of the ruler's sceptre with the plant or tree of life is a conjecture with no support in the above passage.[2] The view that the king "is" the tree of life representing Tammuz in the cult, and represented by the sacred tree or pole has not been supported by convincing evidence.

A rich collection of cylinder seals and art reliefs have furnished evidence of numerous varieties of natural and stylized trees and plants in Mesopotamia, but does this archaeological material provide evidence of the concept of a tree of life or of a "sacred" tree? H. Frankfort pointed out that the very artificial designs of the Assyrian cylinder seals are intelligible only if they represent a ritual object. He concluded that the Assyrian seals are the earliest in which it is certain that a sacred tree is rendered by the seal-cutter.[3] But the very artificial nature of their design also points to a decorative function and origin. The tree motif on Mesopotamian cylinder seals shows several stages of artistic development from a

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[1] Widengren, "The King and the Tree of Life," 21ff.

[2] Widengren presents a relief from Tell Halaf where an enthroned figure holds a rod with three distinct buds which he lifts to his nose. Ibid., fig. 5; cf. figs. 6-11. The rod may represent the ruler's sceptre, but there is no evidence that this is in fact a branch from the plant or tree of life.

[3] H. Frankfort, Cylinder Seals (London, 1939), 206f. Frankfort concluded it is on the Mitannian seals that the transformation occurs from the simple rendering of a natural tree flanked by two animals (cf. Pl. XLIf; text-fig. 44) into the sacred tree of scrolls and palmettes (cf. Pl. XLIIb, i, o; text-figs. 49, 52, 54).

naturalistic living tree to a thing of artifice.[1]

The classic example of the misinterpretation of such archaeological materials is the early Sumerian roll cylinder, now in the British Museum, which shows a woman and a man (with horned headdress) sitting on either side of a stylized tree. The tree is both a date palm with two clusters of dates hanging below its branches and a conifer with its branches loaded with cones; a serpent stands behind the woman. The seal has been frequently interpreted as a stylized tree of life and a parallel to the temptation account in Genesis.[2] But similar tree designs are commonplace in glyptic art and the serpent may be a mere artistic decoration.

There are scenes from Sumerian and Akkadian mythology on cylinder seals, especially in the Akkad period (2330-2180 B.C.) when Mesopotamian art reached its zenith.[3] However, these cylinder seals provide no concrete evidence for the concept of a tree of life. The dubious value of this material as evidence for the tree of life is illustrated by a series of seals with scenes portraying Ea, a birdman and an uprooted plant.[4] One of the seals has been interpreted

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[1] For a general survey, see E. Douglas VanBuren, Symbols of the Gods in Mesopotamian Art (Rome, 1945), 22-29.

[2] See for example, S.H. Langdon, The Mythology of all Races: Semitic (Boston, 1931), V, 179.

[3] See Edith Porada, Mesopotamian Art in Cylinder Seals of the Pierpont Morgan Library (New York, 1947), 32-34.

[4] Ibid., figs. 31-34; cf. Pritchard, ANEP, fig. 687.

as a reference to the theft of the plant or tree of life;[1] but this is complete speculation.

The fragments of a bas relief discovered in 1951 at Timna' in the ruins of a temple of the deity 'Atthar in South Arabia provide an interesting example of the decorative function of the tree-cherub design.[2] The frieze has pairs of winged sphinxes or cherubs facing a central tree from which they are eating fruit. The frieze is continuous, with the mythological animals standing tail to tail. The fruit upon which they are feeding is in the shape of a ball with criss-cross lines, attached by a heavy stem to the tree high on the trunk. The cherub and tree motif has an obvious decorative function; cf. Ezek. 41:17ff where the tree in such a design is designated a palm. Similar art designs establish a Syrian-Mesopotamian origin for the motif.[3] The design suggests the reference to Genesis 3:24 where the cherubim guard the way to the tree of life, but cannot be adduced as evidence of the concept of a tree of life.

In Egypt art reliefs and other archaeological materials provide some evidence of the concept of a tree of life, but these materials must be used with caution. The palm and sycamore appear on tomb

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[1] See Widengren, "The King and the Tree of Life," 22f, n. 5.

[2] R.L. Cleveland, "Cherubs and the 'Tree of Life' in Ancient South Arabia," BASOR, 172 (1963), 55-60.

[3] Ibid., 59.

paintings as symbols of such deities as Selkit, Nut and Hathor.[1] A picture from one of the Theban tombs shows an Egyptian prostrate beside a palm tree bearing two bunches of dates.[2] Similar pictorial material shows Egyptians both offering food to the sycamore and receiving water from a goddess in the tree.[3] There is a picture in Bergema's collection which shows an arm extending out as a branch from the tree trunk. The arm is pouring water from a pitcher into the jar of an Egyptian kneeling before the tree.[4] In another such picture the goddess is partially visible in the branches of the tree and similarly pours water from the tree for the dead.[5] This art work is evidence that in Egypt the sacred tree symbolizes the deity and is, or represents, the source of life.[6]

A review of literary and archaeological materials emphasizes the fragmentary nature of the evidence for the concept of a tree of life in the ancient Near East. There is no evidence for a widespread concept of a tree whose fruit bestows immortality. The positive

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1 See Goodenough, Jewish Symbols, VII, fig. 118; and H. Gressmann, Altorientalische Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testamente (1927^{2}), fig. 101, where the name of Ramses II is written on the leaves of the sycamore.

2 Goodenough, Jewish Symbols, VII, 96, & fig. 113.

3 See H. Gressmann, Altorientalische Text und Bilder (Berlin, 1909^{1}), 47, fig. 74.

4 H.Bergema, De Boom des Levens, fig. 91.

5 Ibid., fig. 92. See also H. Frankfort, Kingship and the Gods (Chicago, 1948), fig. 21, a tomb relief from Thebes.

6 See Goodenough, Jewish Symbols, VII, 91-97.

evidence for a mythical tree of life is limited to tomb reliefs and sepulchral art which presuppose such a concept and a plant of life in Mesopotamia which is called in the Gilgamesh Epic "Man Becomes Young in Old Age."

Old Testament Background.

The Old Testament references to the tree of life are limited to Genesis and Proverbs. But clear allusions to the tree of life occur in Ezekiel 31:3-9, 47:12, without naming it, and the LXX reads "the tree of life" in Isaiah 65:22 for the MT "the days of a tree." The term עֵץ הַחַיִּים occurs in Gen. 2:9, 3:22, 24, Proverbs 3:18, 11:30, 13:12, 15:4; cf. LXX Isa. 65:22, τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς. In Proverbs the tree of life serves as a traditional simile for "health," and "long life"; cf. 3:18, "Wisdom is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her"; 11:30, "the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life"; 15:4, "a gentle tongue is a tree of life."[1]

In the Genesis account of paradise the tree of life has a minor role and is not important to the main narrative. According to Gen. 2:9b the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil grew together in the midst of the garden, and in Gen. 2:17 the tree of knowledge is alone made the test of man's disobedience. But Gen.

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[1] See R. Marcus, "The Tree of Life in Proverbs," JBL, 62 (1943), 117-120. Marcus has correctly noted that the term tree of life in Proverbs has lost its mythological significance and means simply "healing herb" or "remedy."

3:1-21 speaks of only one tree "in the midst of the garden." Though it is not named, the tree of knowledge is assumed by the narrative. The tree of life thus plays no part in the story until Gen. 3:22-24 where its sudden reintroduction raises new problems. If this tree was also forbidden, the writer's silence about it in 2:17, 3:3, is difficult to explain. If it was not forbidden was it within Adam's reach while he was in paradise?

Since Karl Budde first pointed out the confusion in the roles of the two trees in the paradise account,[1] various hypotheses have been proposed to solve this problem. Literary criticism provided a solution by positing a double recension of J in which each source mentioned only one tree. The main recension, J^1, mentioned only the tree of knowledge, while the secondary source, J^2, referred only to the tree of life. Support for this hypothesis was found in the two-fold account of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden (Gen. 3:23f), the double name of Yahweh Elohim, and the syntactical form of Gen. 2:9b where the tree of knowledge appears to have been inserted after the prepositional phrase "in the midst of the garden."[2]

In his study Folk-Lore in the Old Testament James G. Frazer

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[1] Karl Budde, "Der Baum des Lebens," Die biblische Urgeschichte (Giessen, 1883), 46-88.

[2] See John Skinner, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis, ICC, (Edinburgh, 1930[2]), 52f, 94.

argued that the original narrative must have contained a reference to two trees. He maintained that the exegesis can be clarified only if it is assumed that the trees referred to were a tree of life and a tree of death. On the basis of widespread folk-tales Frazer argued that the original form of the Hebrew story of paradise must have related how the serpent by eating of the tree of life obtained immortality for his species. Frazer concluded that the final redactor was offended by the alleged immortality of serpents and presented an abridged version which stripped the legend of this feature.[1]

The anthropological assumptions of J.G. Frazer and the presuppositions of the older literary criticism both offer an inadequate basis for examining the paradise traditions of Genesis 2-3. More recent scholarship, following the work of Hermann Gunkel, has traced the variant traditions in the paradise narrative back to its stage of oral transmission. It has been pointed out that the various traditions which make up the paradise narrative in Genesis 2-3 had been merged long before the final work of the Yahwist.[2] While the paradise narrative shows numerous seams and irregularities, a mechanical division of sources does not give adequate attention to the history of its transmission.[3]

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[1] James G. Frazer, Folk-Lore in the Old Testament (London, 1919), I, 48, 76f.

[2] G. von Rad, Das erste Buch Mose (Goettingen, 1952), 79f; ET, Genesis (London, 1961), 95f.

[3] See U. Cassuto, A Commentary on the Book of Genesis (Jerusalem, ET, 1961), 92f. For an examination of the doublets in Gen. 2-3,

Hermann Gunkel pointed out that the paradise story in Genesis 2-3 , though based on earlier mythological traditions, presents a distinctive Hebrew witness. Gunkel argued that the Genesis paradise account, like the other primitive legends in Genesis, was dominated by an aversion to mythology. The paradise legend in Genesis was mythical in character but had lost much of its original coloring and has reached us only as a "faded myth."[1] Gunkel demonstrated this conclusion by comparing Genesis 2-3 with other Old Testament passages.[2]

Gunkel argued that in the early form of the paradise narrative primeval man (Urmensch) was a semi-divine being, the snake a demon, and paradise the abode of God himself. The key text for Gunkel's demonstration of this early form of the narrative was Ezekiel 28:1-19. In Ezekiel 28:13 Eden is called the "garden of God" (contrast with Gen. 2:8f where it is said that the Lord planted the garden for the sake of man). According to Ezek. 28:14, 16, the garden is situated on a holy mountain where a guardian cherub, anointed by God, protects the primeval dwelling from outside invaders (cf. Gen. 3:24). The king of Tyre is the signet of perfection, the primeval man. He is adorned with precious stones and walks among stones of fire (28:16).

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see P. Humbert, Études sur le récit du Paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse (Neuchatel, 1940).

[1] H. Gunkel, Genesis (Goettingen, 1917[4]), XIV, 39; cf. "The Legends of Genesis," (New York, 1964), 14ff.

[2] Ibid., 33ff.

The Genesis 2-3 narrative, on the other hand, has no reference to a holy mountain, nor does it allude to precious stones that were to be found in Eden. From a comparison of the two passages Gunkel concluded that Ezekiel preserves an older and more mythological recension of the paradise narrative than is found in Genesis 2-3.[1]

The tree of life in Genesis 2-3 must be derived from Near Eastern mythology but it occurs as a truncated tradition in the Biblical paradise account. The Biblical account has shifted the focus from a food of immortality, as in the Adapa myth, and from a search for eternal life such as in the Gilgamesh Epic. The finality of death is explained in the Genesis narrative as the result of Adam's disobedience. God commanded: "But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die" (Gen. 2:17). The tree of life enters into the narrative in Gen. 3:22 only as a false substitute for the broken relationship of dependence and obedience.[2] Adam is expelled from paradise lest he take "also" of the tree of life and eat and live forever (Gen. 3:22).[3]

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[1] H. Gunkel, Schoepfung und Chaos (Goettingen, 1895), 148f.

[2] See B.S. Childs, "The Tree of Knowledge, Tree of Life," IDB, IV, 697.

[3] Ivan Engnell has attempted without success to clarify the role of the two paradise trees. He points out that it is not the narrator's intention to say Adam never had access to the tree of life. He maintains that Adam and Eve are excluded from paradise lest they have both eternal life and ability to multiply themselves. But this interpretation is based on the unstated intention of the Biblical narrator concerning the tree of life. See Ivan Engnell, "Knowledge and Life in the Creation Story," Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East (Leiden, 1955), 116.

The cherubim and the flaming sword appointed to guard the way to the tree of life (Gen. 3:24) are other elements which have parallels in Near Eastern mythological traditions.[1] But the Genesis text does not heighten the mythological tone of the account by elaborating on the magical powers of the sword or by describing the magical properties of the tree of life. As Gunkel pointed out, the paradise account in Genesis appears dominated by an aversion to mythology.

In Ezekiel, on the other hand, the paradise trees are depicted in striking mythological terms. Ezekiel 31:2-9, a poem describing Pharaoh and his multitude as a great cosmological or world tree, depicts the paradise tree as a cedar nourished by the rivers of the deep, the primeval abyss (תְּהוֹם ; 31:4, 15). It is described as a tree of unusual beauty (31:9), envied by all the trees in Eden, the "garden of God" (31:8, 9; cf. 28:13). Since its roots are nourished by the primeval sea, its top reached the heavens and towered above the other trees (31:4f). It is a cosmological tree in which all the birds of the heaven make their nest (31:6). The tree is considered as the tree in the center of paradise, i.e. the tree of life.[2]

The magical properties of the paradise trees are stressed in Ezekiel 47 where the mythological association of trees and water is also to be noted. Ezekiel culminates his description of the temple

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[1] E.A. Speiser, Genesis (Garden City, 1964), 24f; W.F. Albright, "What were the Cherubim," BA, 1 (1938), 1-3.

[2] See A.J. Wensinck, "Tree and Bird as Cosmological Symbols in Western Asia," 25ff.

with a picture of the sacred stream which flows from beneath its threshold (47:1-12). The temple spring becomes a river providing abundant water for the land so that the land becomes a paradise. According to Ezek. 47:12 there will grow on the banks of the river all kinds of trees for food (cf. Gen. 2:9; Ps. 46:5). Their leaves will not wither (cf. Ps. 1:3), nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month. Their leaves will be for healing.

If Gen. 2-3 presents the tree of life in a negative role where its mythological colors are "faded," Ezekiel demonstrates that the myth of the tree of life could also be revived and put to a new use. Ezekiel 47 utilizes the myth of the paradise trees to paint in brighter colors the glory of the new age where conditions will return to those that existed at the beginning. The new age will mean a restoration of paradise and its magical trees, but a restoration which will surpass the old in every respect.[1] LXX Isaiah 65:22 depicts the new age as the time when the Messianic community will be like the days of the tree of life. Men will enjoy the fruit of their labors in the idyllic conditions of paradise.

Ezekiel 47 and LXX Isa. 65:22 anticipate the revival of the tree of life in the more elaborate descriptions of the new age in later Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature. The restoration of paradise in the new age means the revival of the tree of life in its full mythological colors.

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[1] See B.S. Childs, Myth and Reality in the Old Testament (London, 1960), 78ff.

Chapter II

The Jewish Eschatological Interpretation

Introduction

References to the Jewish interpretation of the tree of life have been collected from all available sources, but no attempt has been made to examine this material in any detail from the point of view of a history of interpretation.[1] This is partially accounted for in the fact that there are not a great number or variety of references to the tree of life in early Jewish literature. Even in later Rabbinical literature there are only occasional brief references to the tree of life and these mostly in late sources.

Early Jewish commentators on Genesis varied in their use of the account of paradise and the tree of life. Josephus records the Genesis paradise account in his Jewish Antiquities (I 37-51), but refers to the tree of life only in a brief paraphrase of Genesis 2:9. Jubilees omits all reference to the tree of life and Pseudo-Philo's Biblical Antiquities omits the whole paradise account of Genesis 2-3, though there is a reference to the tree of life in connection with Exodus 20:21. The Septuagint and Targum Onkelos follow the scriptural account in Genesis 2-3 almost literally without any elaboration on the tree of life. There is no mention of paradise or the tree of life

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[1] For general references to the tree of life in Jewish literature, see L. Ginzberg, The Legends of the Jews (Philadelphia, 1925), V, 91, 105, 119; and E.R. Goodenough, Jewish Symbols, VII, 124-134.

in the fragmentary text of the Genesis Apocryphon.

On the other hand, there are several striking references to the tree of life in Jewish apocalyptic literature and there is a midrashic type exposition on the tree of life in the Palestinian targums to the Pentateuch. While these references are varied, they present similar interpretations of the tree of life. In the following chapter the theological factors which have entered in to shape this Jewish interpretation of the tree of life will be examined.

The primary texts are the following: 1) I Enoch 24-25; 2) Test. of Levi 18:10f; 3) Hodayot 8:4-14; 4) II Enoch 8; 5) Apocalypse of Moses 28; 6) Gen. 2:9, 3:22-24, in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and the Fragmentary Targum.

Ethiopic (I) Enoch.

The primary text is I Enoch 24:2-6; 25:1-6.[1]

2) And I went beyond it and saw seven magnificent mountains all differing each from the other . . . 3) And the seventh mountain was in the midst of these, and it excelled them in height, resembling the seat of a throne: and fragrant trees encircled the

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[1] Translation of the Ethiopic text by R.H. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament (Oxford, 1913), II, 204f. The entire book is preserved in late (16th century or later) Ethiopic MSS. Part of the Greek text is extant: 1:1-32:6 is found in two MSS (8th cent. or later) discovered in 1886-87 at Akhmim, Egypt; see J. Flemming and L. Radermacher, Das Buch Henoch, GCS 5 (Leipzig, 1901). Fragments from Qumran include 4Q Enoch^{b} (En. 31-32:1) and

throne. 4) And amongst them was a tree such as I had never yet smelt, neither was any amongst them nor were others like it: it had a fragrance beyond all fragrance, and its leaves and blooms wither not forever; and its fruit is beautiful, and its fruit resembles the dates of a palm. 5) Then I said: 'How beautiful is this tree, and fragrant, and its leaves are fair, and its blooms very delightful in appearance.' 6) Then answered Michael, one of the holy and honoured angels who was with me, and was their leader.

25:1) And he said to me: 'Enoch, why dost thou ask me regarding the fragrance of the tree, and why dost thou wish to learn the truth?' 2) Then I answered him saying: 'I wish to know about everything, but especially about this tree.' 3) And he answered saying, 'This high mountain which thou hast seen, whose summit is like the throne of God, is his throne, where the Holy Great One, the Lord of Glory, the Eternal King, will sit, when he shall come down to visit the earth with goodness. 4) And as for this fragrant tree no mortal is permitted to touch it till the great judgment, when he shall take vengeance on all and bring (everything) to its consummation forever. 5) It shall then be given to the righteous and holy.

4Q Enoch^{d} (En. 31:2-32:3); see J.T. Milik, "Hénoch au pays des aromates," RB, 65 (1958), 70-77.

Its fruit shall be for food to the elect: it shall be transplanted to the holy place, to the temple of the Lord, the Eternal King. 6) Then shall they rejoice with joy and be glad, and into the holy place shall they enter; and its fragrance shall be in their bones, and they shall live a long life on earth, such as thy fathers lived: and in their days shall no sorrow or plague or torment or calamity touch them.' 7) Then blessed I the God of Glory, the Eternal King, who hath prepared such things for the righteous, and hath created them and promised to give them.

Related texts: I Enoch 32:1-6, 77:3; Ezekiel 28:12ff; Isaiah 14:12f; Sirach 24:13-17.

I Enoch 24-25[1] forms part of a travel narrative in which Enoch visits the place of the final judgment of the fallen angels, the tree of life, Jerusalem, and the garden of righteousness.[2] The most striking feature of this travel narrative is the separation of

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[1] The book of Enoch, a compilation of disparate sources of different types, was probably composed in the first century B.C. The first of Enoch's five major books, Enoch 6-36, was written originally in Aramaic and may be pre-Maccabean in date; see R.H. Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, II, 170. For a brief survey on the question of an underlying Aramaic text, see C.C. Torrey, "Notes on the Greek Texts of Enoch," JAOS, 62 (1942), 52-60.

[2] There are two parallel travel narratives: 1) IEn. 17-19; 2) I Enoch 20-36. The latter text is more developed; cf. 18:6-9 with 24:1-3. See P. Grelot, "La géographie mythique d'Hénoch et ses sources orientales," RB, 65 (1958), 38-44.

paradise into two parts: 1) the seven mountains where the tree of life is located (I En. 24-25); 2) the garden of righteousness where the tree of knowledge is located (I Enoch 32). The latter is the Genesis garden from which Adam and Eve were cast out after eating of the tree of knowledge (32:6). It is located far from the seven mountains in the northeast (32:1). The tree of life was temporarily placed in this garden of righteousness but after the fall it was returned to the mountain paradise in the northwest which contains the throne and residence of God. [1]

Such deviations from Genesis result from the fact that the author has harmonized Genesis with other divergent mythological traditions.[2] The Genesis account of paradise is not formally cited but is alluded to at numerous points and provides the conception of the garden of righteousness.[3] But mythological traditions which place the throne and abode of the gods in the mountains of the north have also informed the author's representation of paradise and the

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[1] See Grelot, "La géographie mythique d'Hénoch," 43.

[2] Evidence for the use of Genesis is conclusively shown in the description of the tree of knowledge (32:6). A variant reading in the Greek text of 32:3 is of note: δύω μέν Gg, "two" magnificent trees. The reading would require that "the tree of life" be inserted before "and the tree of knowledge" in agreement with Gen. 2:9. For discussion, see R.H. Charles, The Book of Enoch (Oxford, 1912), 60-61.

[3] In I Enoch 77:3 the garden of righteousness is the third division of north. In 4Q astr^{a} and astr^{b} the entire world, not north, is divided into three parts (concentric circles?); see Grelot, op. cit., 38ff; cf. J.T. Milik, op. cit., 70ff

world.[1] The result is a division of paradise into two parts: a paradise in the mountains of the northwest and a paradise garden in the northeast. The removal of the tree of life from the garden of righteousness and its relocation beside the throne of God on the seventh mountain in the northwest is an apparent innovation of the author.

The authors use of mythological traditions is further shown in the description of the tree of life itself. In I Enoch 24 the tree is depicted in a stylized form as a tree whose leaves, blossoms and wood wither not forever, and whose fruit resembles the dates of a palm. In Mesopotamian art the date palm occupied a prominent place and frequently appeared in a stylized form.[2] A mythological element which is given special prominence in the description of I Enoch 24-25 is the divine fragrance of the tree.[3] All the paradise trees

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[1] In the Ugaritic texts the residence of Baal is in the heights of the north (BV, iva, 38; BI*, i, 11). Baal is described as departing to the heights of the north (BII, iv, 19); it is there that Anat goes to meet him (BII, v, 23). See W.F. Albright, "Baal-Zephon," Festschrift A. Bertholet (Tuebingen, 1950), 1-14; idem, "The Location of the Garden of Eden," AJSLL, 39 (1923), 15-31.

P. Grelot, op. cit., 43, explains the division of paradise into two parts as an attempt to harmonize Gen. 2 with Isa. 14 and Ezek. 28. But this is very improbable. Both Isa. 14:12f and Ezek. 28:12ff utilize traditions which are derived, as in I Enoch 24, from Canaanite-Mesopotamian mythology.

[2] See E. Douglas VanBuren, Symbols of the Gods in Mesopotamian Art (Rome, 1945), 22-29.

[3] For a survey of Egyptian, Persian, Hellenistic, and Jewish usage of the motif of paradisiac fragrance, see Ernest Lohmeyer, "Vom goettlichen Wohlgeruch," Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil-hist. klasse, 10, 9,

are fragrant (24:3, 29:1, 30:3, 32:1), but the tree of life has a fragrance beyond all fragrance: ὀσμὴν εἶχεν εὐωδεστέραν πάντων ἀρωμάτων (24:4). Its fragrance will be in the bones of the righteous in the new age (25:6).

The description of the tree of life as beautiful to the sight and desirable for food parallels the Genesis description of the trees of Eden in Gen. 2:9 (cf. 3:6). But the author of I Enoch 24-25 has modified his Genesis traditions and has given the tree of life a new function.

Genesis 2:9 LXX	I Enoch 24:5
Καὶ ἐξανέτειλεν ὁ θεὸς ἔτι ἐκ τῆς γῆς πᾶν ξύλον <u>ὡραῖον εἰς ὅρασιν</u>	Τότε εἶπον· ὡς καλὸν τὸ δένδρον τοῦτο ἐστιν ... Καὶ <u>ὡραῖα</u> τὰ φύλλα καὶ τὰ ἄνθη αὐτοῦ <u>ὡραῖα τῇ ὁράσει.</u>

(1919), 1-52.

A parallel which has several points of similarity with I Enoch occurs in Sirach 24 where Wisdom is personified as a sacred tree. Wisdom is established in Jerusalem and in the Temple following her search throughout the cosmos for a resting place (24:8-12; cf. I En. 25:5, the transplanting of the tree of life to the temple). In Zion Wisdom takes root and becomes a fruitful tree (24:10ff). Wisdom is compared to the cedar of Lebanon, the cypress, the palm, the olive, sycamore, and finally with the vine (24:17). She exudes an aroma of spices (24:15; cf. I En. 32:1).

The description of Wisdom as a sacred tree (24:13-17) is followed by an invitation to the reader to feast on her abundant fruit (24:19-22) and by an equation of Wisdom to the Torah which takes the form of a comparison with the four rivers of paradise (cf. Gen. 2:10-14) and to the Jordan. For discussion of the text, see W. L. Knox, "The Divine Wisdom," <u>JThS</u>, 38 (1937), 230-237. Knox maintains that the figure of Wisdom in Sirach 24 shows a startling affinity to a Syrian Astarte with features of Isis. Astarte, as the great mother goddess, was symbolized by the cedars of Lebanon.

Gen. 2:9 LXX	I Enoch 25: 4-5
Καὶ Καλὸν εἰς βρῶσιν καὶ τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς ἐν μέσῳ τῷ παραδείσῳ ...	τότε δικαίοις καὶ ὁσίοις δοθήσεται ὁ καρπὸς αὐτοῦ εἰς ζωὴν εἰς βοράν.[1]
Genesis 3:6	**I Enoch 32: 5-6**
καὶ εἶδεν ἡ γυνὴ ὅτι καλὸν τὸ ξύλον εἰς βρῶσιν, καὶ ὅτι ἀρεστὸν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἰδεῖν καὶ ὡραῖόν ἐστιν τοῦ κατανοῆσαι, καὶ λαβοῦσα τοῦ καρποῦ αὐτοῦ ἔφαγεν.	τότε εἶπον· ὡς καλὸν τὸ δένδρον καὶ ὡς ἐπίχαρι τῇ ὁράσει ... τοῦτο τὸ δένδρον φρονήσεως ἐξ οὗ ἔφαγεν ὁ πατήρ του...

The LXX follows the Hebrew text in Gen. 2:9, 3:6, in a literal word for word translation.[2] I Enoch has heightened the Genesis description of the beauty of both the tree of knowledge and the tree of life. Enoch 32:5: ὡς Καλὸν τὸ δένδρον καὶ ὡς ἐπίχαρι τῇ ὁράσει, cf. Gen. 3:6, ἀρεστὸν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς . Enoch 24:5: the tree of life is "a tree of beauty with leaves and flowers beautiful to the

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[1] R.H. Charles rejects the reading εἰς ζωήν which occurs in the greek MS Gg, and the Ethiopic ḫayewat, as renderings based on a corruption of לחוא "will be" to לחיאא , "for life," in the assumed Aramaic original. According to Charles the author had before him Ezekiel 47:12, יהיו פריו למאכל . But this is an unnecessary assumption since the phrase "for life for food" is explained on the basis of Gen. 2:9 where all the paradise trees including the tree of life are"good for food." See R.H. Charles, The Book of Enoch, (1912), 53.

[2] In LXX Gen. 3:6 the phrase ὡραῖον ἐστιν τοῦ κατανοῆσαι, "beautiful to look at" heightens the Hebrew נֶחְמָד הָעֵץ לְהַשְׂכִּיל "the tree was desirable to look upon" (RSV:"was to be desired to make one wise"; for translation of the verb הִשְׂכִּיל , cf. Brown-Driver-Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the O.T.(Oxford, 1957), 968.

sight;" cf. Gen. 2:9, πᾶν ξύλον ὡραῖον εἰς ὅρασιν . In Enoch 32:6 as in Gen. 3:6 the fruit of the tree of knowledge is eaten, but in I En. 24-25, contrary to Genesis, the phrase εἰς βρῶσιν is suppressed and reappears only in the eschatological use of the tree of life.

The new prominence given to the tree of life in the travel narrative of I Enoch 20-36 is noteworthy since in Genesis 2-3 it is the tree of knowledge, not the tree of life, which has the most important role. The author has focused attention on the tree of life by heightening its mythological dimension according to the "Urzeit-Endzeit" pattern. The fruit of the tree will give "life" to the righteous in the new age when they shall receive paradise and the things promised to them from the beginning (25:5, 7). No mortal has the right to touch this fragrant tree until the great judgment.[1]

The particulars of the conception of the tree of life in I Enoch are shaped in terms of the aim and theology of the author. The main question dealt with in I Enoch 1-36 is "Why do the righteous suffer?"[2] The first five chapters deal with the fate of the wicked and of the righteous: on the day of judgment the wicked will receive full

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[1] I Enoch 24:4 presupposes that the way to the tree of life (as in Gen. 3:24) is guarded by the cherubim and the flaming sword (fire? cf. 14:12, 19; 17:3; 20:8).

[2] See S.B. Frost, Old Testament Apocalyptic (London, 1952), 169-173.

punishment and the righteous equally full reward (1:1, 7-8; 5:9; cf. 10:17ff; 27:3ff). The answer to the problem of the righteous sufferer is found in the promised rewards in the new age. For the author paradise and the tree of life belong to those pre-existent things prepared by God and promised to the righteous (25:7). The day of judgment is a day of vengeance (ἐκδίκησις), but for the righteous it will be a day of reward when they are given the right (ἐξουσία) to the tree of life (25:4f). The new age will be a return to the idyllic conditions of paradise: the fruit of the tree of life will be food for the righteous and joy and gladness will replace sorrow and calamity.

The reinterpretation of the Genesis tree of life as the eschatological tree for food is in part accomplished by recovering its mythological dimension as the food of immortality; cf. 25:6 where the fragrance of the tree of life will be in the bones of the righteous and its fruit will insure them a long life "on earth."[1] The Genesis account all but obscures the mythological colors of the tree of life, but the author of I Enoch 24-25 restores them fully in his description of the tree as one of the major blessings of the new age.

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[1] While a later tradition in I Enoch conceives of paradise as the "heavenly" abode of the righteous (cf. 60:8, 61:12, 70:1-3), the author of I Enoch 24-25 retains the Genesis conception of an "earthly" paradise (25:6; cf. 5:9). This usage of terminology in I En. 25:6 indicates that the distinction between "on earth" and "in heaven" is not as significant as R.H. Charles has made it. See Charles, Eschatology: The Doctrine of a Future Life in Israel, Judaism and Christianity (1963^{2}), 179, 219, etc. The terminology reflects a fluid use of language (cf. Apoc. Abr. 21), not stages of development.

The Testament of Levi

The primary text is Testament of Levi 18:10-11.

> And he shall open the doors of paradise and remove the threatening sword against Adam. And he shall give the saints to eat of the tree of life and the spirit of holiness shall be upon them.[1]

Related texts in the Test. XII Patriarchs: T. Dan 5:12; cf. Test. Judah 21:2-3; T. Naphtali 5:3-4. Other references: II Esdras 8:52; cf. 2:10, 12, 18-19.

Testament of Levi 18:2-14 praises the priestly Messiah of the last days who will bring in the glorious age when paradise will be opened to the saints.[2] The allusion to paradise and the threatening sword in 18:10f is based on the Genesis paradise account.

Genesis 3:24	Test. Levi 18:10
Καὶ ἔταξεν τὰ χερουβὶμ	Καὶ ἀποστήσει
Καὶ τὴν φλογίνην ῥομφαίαν	τὴν ἀπειλοῦσαν ῥομφαίαν
τὴν στρεφομένην φυλάσσειν	Κατὰ τοῦ Ἀδάμ.
τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς.	

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[1] Translations of the Test. XII Patriarchs in this chapter are based on the text of R.H. Charles, The Greek Versions of the Testaments of Twelve Patriarchs (Oxford, 1908).

[2] The Test. XII Patriarchs are closely related in manner of speech and matters of concepts with the Qumran texts and may well belong to the cycle of Essene writings. For discussion of 4Q Levi, see J.T. Milik, "Le Testament de Levi en Arameen," RB, 62 (1955), 398-406. See K.G. Kuhn, "The Two Messiahs of Aaron and Israel," The Scrolls and the New Testament, ed. K. Stendahl, (New York, 1957), 58; and F.M. Cross, Jr., The Ancient Library of Qumran (Garden City, 1961^2), 200, n. 6.

Instead of the flaming sword set up to guard the way to the tree of life, Test. Levi speaks of the "threatening sword against Adam." The sword is to be removed in the new age when the righteous receive the things Adam lost.[1]

In both I Enoch 25:4f and Test. Levi 18:11 the tree of life is an eschatological reward for the righteous.

I Enoch 25:4f	Test. Levi 18:11
τότε δικαίοις καὶ	καὶ δώσει
ὁσίοις δοθήσεται	τοῖς ἁγίοις
ὁ καρπὸς αὐτοῦ	φαγεῖν ἐκ
εἰς ζωὴν εἰς βοράν.	τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς...

The new element added in Test. Levi is that the tree of life will be given to the righteous by the priestly Messiah.[2]

The role of the priestly Messiah as the one who opens paradise and gives the tree of life to the saints is connected with the

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For the theory of a Christian origin of the Testaments, see M. DeJonge, The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Study of their Text, Composition, and Origin (Assen, 1953), 52, 90ff; cf. M. Black, "The Messiah in the Test. Levi 18," ExpT, 60 (1948-49), 321-322; see also J.R. Porter, ExpT, 61 (1949-1950), 91.

[1] For lists of the losses of Adam and the rewards of the righteous in pseudepigraphic and rabbinic writings, see B. Otzen, "Some Text-problems in 1QS," ST, 11 (1957), 96ff.

[2], Beasley-Murray argues that Test. Levi 18:10-12 has God as subject, not the Messiah, and that the passage declares the works of God. But evidence for a change of subject at verse 10 is inconclusive. The passage continues the description of the Messiah and his work. See G.R. Beasley-Murray, "The Two Messiahs in the Test. XII Patriarchs," JThS, 48 (1947), 4f.

expectation of two Messiahs in the Test. XII Patriarchs. The two Messiahs, one a high priest from the tribe of Levi, and one a royal Messiah from the tribe of Judah, were given different rank and functions; cf. Test. Judah 21:2-5 where Judah is given the kingship and Levi receives the priesthood but the kingship is subordinated to the priesthood. Salvation is to come through Levi and Judah jointly (T. Levi 2:11, T. Dan 5:10, Test. Gad 8:1). But Levi is the great warrior and dominant figure: he was to war against Israel's enemies, Beliar and the powers of wickedness (T. Reuben 6:11f, T. Levi 18:14), and deliver the souls of the saints held captive by Beliar (T. Dan 5:11). Included in his prerogatives and powers is the right to remove the threatening sword against Adam and reward the tree of life to the saints.

Test. Naphtali 5 gives a vision of Levi and Judah outstripping their brethren in gaining possession of the sun and the moon.[1] T. Naph. 5:4: "And when Levi became as the sun, behold, a certain young man gave to him twelve branches of palm; and Judah was bright as the moon, and under their feet were twelve rays." The passage implies that both Levi and Judah share the rule of the tribes, though Levi comes first.[2] The twelve branches which form the

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[1] For other adaptations of the symbolism, cf. Gen. 37:9f, the vision of Joseph, and Rev. 12:1, the vision of the woman arrayed in the sun with the moon under her feet and twelve stars on her head.

[2] Beasley-Murray, "The two Messiahs in the Test. XII Patriarchs," 9-10.

sceptre of authority are branches of palm, a common symbol for the tree of life (I En. 24:4). It is the Messiah of Levi who holds the authority and right to the eschatological tree of life.

The restoration of paradise in the Test. XII Patriarchs is synonymous with the establishment of the new Jerusalem. The priestly Messiah will open the θύραι of paradise (T. Levi 18:10). T. Dan 5:12 links the conceptions of Eden and the "new" Jerusalem in a clear parallelism: Καὶ ἀναπαύσονται ἐν Ἐδὲμ ἅγιοι καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς νέας Ἱερουσαλὴμ εὐφρανθήσονται δίκαιοι.[1] The dwelling place of the righteous will be in the eschatological Eden, the new Jerusalem (cf. I Enoch 25:5).

II Esdras 8:52 has a unique list of the eschatological rewards prepared for the righteous which parallels the use in the Testaments of Levi and Dan. The list links together paradise, the age to come, the tree of life and a city (the new Jerusalem) with other recurring apocalyptic themes such as the removal of illness, death, sorrow, and corruption (8:52-54). The combination of these themes resembles I Enoch 25:5f, but the restoration of paradise is not a return to a patriarchal long life on earth. Paradise and the new Jerusalem were prepared in heaven by God from the beginning of time (3:6; 6:2; 7:26;

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[1] This is the only occurrence of the term "new Jerusalem" before the book of Revelation. DeJonge argues that it therefore betrays Christian influence; DeJonge, op. cit., 92, 154. But T. Dan 5:12 has νέα Ἱερουσαλήμ ; whereas Rev. 3:12, 21:2, has Καινὴ Ἱερουσαλήμ.

10:54-55) and will endure for all eternity.

In both II Esdras 8:52f and T. Levi 18:10f paradise and the tree of life have become fixed symbols in a common eschatology. Their use as fixed symbols, however, presupposes the growth of an exegetical tradition of Gen. 2:9, 3:22-24, in which there is a resurgence of mythological elements.

Hodayot: Thanksgiving Psalms from Qumran.

The primary text is Hodayot 8:4-14.[1]

4) I [praise thee, O Lord, for] you have placed me by
a fountain of streams in dry land, and a spring of water
in a parched land and a drink for

5) a garden [of Eden in the wilderness, that there
grow up] for thy glory a plantation of cypress and elm
together with box, trees of

6) life at the secret spring hidden in the midst of all
the trees by the water. And they shall be to cause a shoot
to sprout up for an eternal planting

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[1] For the Hebrew text, see E.L. Sukenik, Ozar ham-Megillōt hag-genuzōt (Jerusalem, 1954; ET, The Dead Sea Scrolls of the Hebrew University, 1955); A.M. Habermann, Megilloth Midbar Yehuda (Jerusalem, 1959).

For notes on translation and reconstruction of the text, see especially Svend Holm-Nielsen, Hodayot: Psalms from Qumran (Aarhus, 1960). Other references: M. Delcor, Les Hymnes de Qumran (Paris, 1962); M. Mansoor, The Thanksgiving Hymns (Grand Rapids, 1961); Meir Wallenstein, The Nezer and the Submission in Suffering Hymn from the Dead Sea Scrolls (Istanbul, 1957).

7) by taking root before they sprout up, and they spread out their roots to the river, and a stem from it shall be opened to the living waters

8) and shall become an everlasting fountain; and on the sprouting (of its leaves) feed all the [beasts of] the forest and its stock shall be a dwelling place for all who pass by

9) the road, and its branches (shall be) for all winged birds. But all the trees by the water exalt themselves over it, for where they are planted, they grow tall,

10) although they do not send out their roots to the river. But the holy shoot grows up into a planting of truth by hiding and

11) sealing its secret, not to be accounted and not to be known. And, O God, you protect its fruit with the mystery of the strong warriors,

12) and the holy spirits and the fiery flame which turns every way (in order that) no [stranger shall pass] in the fountain of life, and with the eternal trees,

13) he shall not drink the waters of hcliness, and its fruit shall not flourish with [the planting] of the clouds; for he sees without recognizing

14) and he considers without believing in the fountain of life

Related texts in Hodayot: 1QH 8:20b-22; 6:15-17.

8:20b) And the fruitful planting [. . for an] eternal [fount]ain for the glorious Eden and shall bear [fruit forever.]

21) And by my hand you have opened their spring with channels [of water . . .] to turn upon set measures, and a planting of

22) their trees upon the plumb line of the sun . . . for glorious foliage.

6:15) [Their root] shall spring up as a flower . . . forever, to put forth a shoot for the branches of an eternal planting and it will cast its shade over all [and its top reaches]

16) up to heaven, . . . its roots to the deep, and the rivers of Eden [shall water its branches] and it shall be [a great tree without]

17) limit . . . over the world without end.

Other References: 1QS 8:4-6; 11:7-9; CD 1:7-8.

The figure of the "eternal planting," not the tree of life, is given special prominence in Hodayot 8:4ff.[1] But there are important

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[1] For a brief review of the date question with bibliographic notes, see M. Mansoor, The Thanksgiving Hymns, 7-10. S.A. Birnbaum has suggested a date in the late first century B.C. or early first century A.D. for the Hodayot on the basis of script. Birnbaum, "The Date of the Hymns Scroll," PEQ, 84 (1952), 94-103.

points of comparison between the two figures which ought to be noted. In the first place, elements from the Genesis account of the tree of life recur in the description of the eternal planting. Secondly, the eternal planting is depicted in colorful mythological terms which are reminiscent of Ezekiel's use of paradise traditions (cf. Ezek. 28, 31).

The most striking use of the figure of the eternal planting occurs in Hodayot 8. The text has been damaged but lines 4-15 are nearly intact and restoration is possible.[1] The text begins with the common formula אודכה אדון, "I praise thee, O Lord," (cf. 2:20, 31; 3:3, 19). After praising the Lord for placing him at a fountain in the wilderness (cf. Isa. 41:18, 44:3, 49:10), the author goes on to describe his paradise garden in 8:5f: "a plantation of cypress and elm together with box, trees of life at the secret spring in the midst of all the trees by the water." The closest parallel to this description occurs in Isaiah (cf. 41:19, 60:13).[2]

The cypress, plane and box trees are called עצי חיים. The plural "trees of life" is in contrast with the singular עץ חיים in Gen. 2:9, 3:22, 24. The trees of life are located at a mysterious spring מקור (8:6; cf. Gen. 2:10, II En. 8:5), and are

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[1] A lacuna at the top of the column cuts out the first three or four words of lines 4-5. A lacuna which runs from top to bottom down the middle of the column cuts out from one to four words in lines 16-30, but is only a few letters in width in lines 4-14.

[2] The lacuna in the beginning of line 5 may have contained a reference to the garden of Eden as in Isa. 51:3: "he will make her wilderness like Eden."

contrasted with "trees by the water."[1] The latter grow tall and exalt themselves above the "eternal planting," the "shoot" (נצר) which grows forth from the trees of life (8:6, 9). The "eternal planting" has features of the mythical cosmological tree: 1) it provides food and shelter for birds and beasts;[2] 2) its stock shall be a "dwelling place" for all who pass by.[3]

There are two kinds of trees: 1) trees by the water; 2) trees of life. The exalted trees by the water may represent Israel and the "shoot" which grows forth from the trees of life for an eternal planting is then the Qumran community. Dupont-Sommer interprets the trees by the water as the wicked among whom the elect live until the time of judgment (cf. 8:17ff), and the "shoot" as the church founded by the Teacher of Righteousness which comes forth from the trees of life, i.e. a congregation of pious Jews living before the appearance of the Teacher of Righteousness.[4] H. Ringgren suggests that the

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[1] Cf. Ezek. 31:14: "all this in order that no trees by the water may grow to lofty height." The question of dependence on Ezek. 31 is complicated by the fact that 31:14 may be a marginal gloss. See W. Zimmerli, Ezekiel (1962), 760.

[2] The mythological symbol of the cosmological tree occurs in Ezek. 31:1-18, 17:22-24, and Dan. 4:10-14, 20-27. Common elements are: 1) it stands in the middle of the earth; 2) it is of great height; 3) the branches cover the earth; 4) the fruit provides food and healing; 5) birds, beasts and nations are sheltered by it.

[3] Cf. Ezek. 31:6, 17:23, Dan. 4:12. The word מרבץ is used in the Old Testament as "trampling place," but the context in line 8b requires a positive meaning like "dwelling place." See Holm-Nielsen, Hodayot, 150, n. 13.

[4] Dupont-Sommer, The Essene Writings from Qumran (New York, 1962), 226f. Cf. Ps. Solomon 14:3f, Odes of Solomon 11:15-16.

"shoot" is either the founder of the sect or the sect itself in its insignificant beginnings.[1]

Two passages in the Manual of Discipline support the contention that the eternal planting is to be identified as the Qumran community. The first of these texts is set off by a space in the line which suggests it is a citation.

1QS 8:5

למטעת עולם בית קודש לישראל ופוד קודש
קודשים לאהרון

An eternal planting, a holy house consisting of Israel and a most holy congregation consisting of Aaron. . .[2]

1QS 11:8f

ועם בני שמים חבר פודם לעצת יחד ופוד
מבנות קודש למטעת עולם עם כול קץ נהיה

With the sons of heaven he has united their assembly for a community council. And the assembly is a house of holiness (or, will be in the heavenly abode) for an eternal planting during every period that will be.

In the latter text the sons of heaven (and the holy ones; 11:7) refer to angels (cf. Wisd. of Solomon 5:5). The Hebrew ופוד מבנות קודש does not make sense and requires emendation. The reference may be to the heavenly abode of angels and sanctified spirits, but the emendation "a house of holiness" (cf. 8:5) is also possible.[3] The

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[1] H. Ringgren, "The Branch and the Plantation in the Hodayot," BR, 6 (1961), 3.

[2] Wernberg-Møller translates the preposition ל by "consisting of" in order not to obscure the point that Israel and Aaron indicate the constituent parts (priests and laity) which make up the Temple. P. Wernberg-Møller, The Manual of Discipline (Leiden, 1957), 33, 124.

[3] Ibid., 152, n. 18.

Qumran community will endure as an eternal planting, a cosmological tree , during every period that will be. Their assembly is united with the sons of heaven forever.

In Hodayot 8:6, 10, the "shoot" is depicted as the "planting." The word for shoot is נצר ; cf. Isa. 60:21 where the people of the new age are the מטעי מעשה ידי , "the shoot of my planting."[1] The figures of the shoot and the planting may have been originally derived from Isaiah, but now they are reinterpreted in terms of paradise imagery. The holy shoot, נצר קודש , grows up for a planting of truth, מטעת אמת , whose secret is sealed and hidden, not to be accounted or known (8:10f).[2] The planting of truth is thus styled as the paradise tree of life which no one can touch (cf. I Enoch 25:4).

Genesis 3:24	Hodayot 8:10b-12
וַיְגָרֶשׁ אֶת־הָאָדָם וַיַּשְׁכֵּן מִקֶּדֶם לְגַן־	ומפריית נצר קודש למטעת
עֵדֶן אֶת־הַכְּרֻבִים	אמת... ואתה אל שכחה
וְאֵת לַהַט הַחֶרֶב	בעד פרין ברז גבורי
הַמִּתְהַפֶּכֶת לִשְׁמֹר	כוח ורוחות קודש
אֶת־דֶּרֶךְ עֵץ הַחַיִּים	ולהט אש מתהפכת

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[1] In Isaiah 61:3 the "planting of the Lord" is equated with "the oaks of righteousness" (אֵילֵי הַצֶּדֶק = מַטַּע יְהוָה); cf. Isa. 17:11; 11:1. In CD 1:7 a "root of planting" (שורש מטעה) is caused to grow forth from Israel and Aaron to possess the land.

[2] For translation notes, see Holm-Nielsen, Hodayot: Psalms from Qumran, 151, n. 18.

Genesis 3:24	Hodayot 8:10b-12
And he placed at the east of the garden of Eden the cherubim and the flaming sword which turns every way to guard the way to the tree of life.	And the holy shoot grows up for a planting of truth . . . but, O God, you protect its fruit with the mystery of the strong warriors and the holy spirits and the fiery flame which turns every way.

In the Hodayot the "fruit of the planting of truth" is protected from strangers, whereas in Genesis the tree of life is guarded lest Adam should eat from it.[1] Instead of the cherubim, Hodayot 8:10 speaks of the strong warriors, גבורי כוח,[2] and spirits of holiness, רוחות קודש.[3] The flaming sword, להט החרב, is replaced by the fiery flame, להט אש (cf. I En. 14:12, 22, πῦρ φλεγόμενον κύκλῳ).

Hodayot 8:10b-12 presupposes that the eternal planting is protected from certain people who are not allowed to share the salvation of the sons of light. The restoration of the text in line 12a "so

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[1] Holm-Nielsen has noted that the use of scripture in the Hodayot is mostly limited to a free and paraphrasing use of the individual expressions or of the context of individual expressions from the Old Testament. In the single case where a formula of citation is used in Hodayot (17:12, בְּיַד מֹשֶׁה, literally, "at Moses' hand") no actual quotation is given. The formula introduces at best a free paraphrase of Exodus 34:5ff. Holm-Nielsen, Hodayot: Psalms from Qumran, 302, 304.

[2] The "strong warriors" are heavenly beings who are servants of God. In 10:34 they are linked with the "hosts of thy saints;" cf. 5:21; and Psalm 103:20 where the angels of the Lord are גִּבֹּרֵי כֹחַ who do his word.

[3] The "spirits of holiness" are part of the elaborate angelology of the Hodayot. See M. Mansoor, The Thanksgiving Hymns, 80-83.

that no stranger shall pass" is plausible on the basis of 1QH 6:27 where reference is made to a building into which the stranger is not allowed to enter.[1] In 1QH 8 it is the eternal planting which is protected from strangers. The stranger is prevented from coming near because he sees without recognizing and considers in his heart without believing (8:13f).

Holm-Nielsen has concluded that the principal Old Testament background for Hodayot 8:4ff is the vine imagery of Psalm 80:9-15 where Israel is portrayed as a vine which God planted and caused to prosper but which he has allowed to be cut down and pillaged.[2] Dupont-Sommer draws attention to Isaiah 61:3, 60:21, as other distinctive Biblical parallels.[3] But Ezekiel 31 should also be noted, especially since the striking mythological allusions of Ezekiel have parallels in the Hodayot description of the eternal planting.

In 1QH 6:15f the eternal planting is depicted as a towering tree whose shade is cast over all and whose roots are watered by the rivers of Eden.

1QH 6:15f

> [Their root] shall spring up as a flower . . .forever,
> to put forth a shoot (צמח) for the branches

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1 See Mansoor, The Thanksgiving Hymns, 154, n. 9.

2 Holm-Nielsen, Hodayot: Psalms from Qumran, 165; but no use of vine imagery occurs in 1QH 8:4ff.

3 Dupont-Sommer, The Essene Writings from Qumran, 226, n. 1.

> of an eternal planting (מטעת עולם) and it will cast its shade over all [and its top reaches] up to heaven, . . . its roots to the deep (תהום), and the rivers of Eden [shall water its branches]...

As in Ezekiel's allegory on Pharaoh as the great paradise cedar, the planting is watered by the mythical "deep" (cf. Ezek. 31:4) and has features of the cosmological tree (cf. Ezek. 31:6, 9). This paradise tree is the Qumran community; it provides shade for all peoples (1QH 6:8-14), but will become a consuming fire on the wicked at the end time (6:18f; cf. 8:17-20).

In 1QH 8:20b-22 the "fruitful" planting is stylized as a paradise tree which grows up to great glory (cf. Ezek. 31:7-8). The text is badly damaged and cannot be completely restored. Dupont-Sommer reconstructs 8:20b as follows: "But the fruitful planting [shall prosper, and it shall become an] everlasting [fount] ain for the glorious Eden and shall bear [fruit forever]."[1] Dupont-Sommer notes the parallel in Odes of Solomon 38:17-21, but I Enoch 24:4f and Ezekiel 31:8f should also be compared.

If the imagery of the planting and the shoot has been drawn from Isaiah, it is now reshaped in terms of paradise traditions where the mythological elements have been given a new importance.

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[1] Dupont-Sommer, The Essene Writings from Qumran, 228, n. 8.

Slavonic (II) Enoch.

The primary text is II Enoch 8-9:1 (chp. 5, Vaillant edition).[1]

8:1) And those men took me thence, and led me up on to the third heaven, and placed me there (B: in the midst of paradise, and a place unknown in goodness of appearance); And I looked downwards, and saw the produce of these places, such as has never been known for goodness.

2) And I saw all the sweet-flowering trees and beheld their fruits, which were sweet-smelling, and all the foods borne by them bubbling with fragrant exhaltation (B: and four rivers flowing by with quiet course, and every growth is good, bearing fruit for food).

3) And in the midst of the trees that of life, in that place whereon the Lord rests, when he goes up into paradise; and this tree is of ineffable goodness and fragrance (B: and another olive tree alongside was always discharging the oil of its fruit), and adorned more than every existing thing;

4) and on all sides it is in form gold-looking and vermilion and fire-like and covers all, and it has the produce

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[1] R.H. Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (1913), II, 433ff, text A; cf. A. Vaillant, Le Livre des Secrets d'Hénoch: texte slave et traduction francaise (Paris, 1952). The Slavonic text of Vaillant's edition is similar to text B of Charles. The underlined portions of the text are, according to Vaillant, probable amplifications by a later editor; see discussion below.

of all fruits. Its root is in the garden at the earth's end.

5) And paradise is between corruptibility and incorruptibility. And two springs come out which send forth honey and milk, and their springs send forth oil and wine, and they separate into four parts, and go round

6) with quiet course, and go down into the paradise of Eden, between corruptibility and incorruptibility. And thence they go forth along the earth, and have a revolution to their circle even as other elements.

7) And here there is no unfruitful tree, and every place is blessed.

8) And there are three hundred angels very bright, who keep the garden, and with incessant sweet singing and never silent voices serve the Lord throughout all days and hours. And I said: 'How very sweet is this place,' and those men said to me:

9:1) This place, O Enoch, is prepared for the righteous, who endure all manner of offence from those that exasperate their souls, who avert their eyes from iniquity, and make righteous judgment, and give bread to the hungering, and cover the naked with clothing, and raise up the fallen, and . . . for them is prepared this place for eternal inheritance.

II Enoch 8 is a midrash on Genesis 2-3 in which the author presents paradise and the tree of life as the eternal inheritance for the righteous.[1] The MS tradition is complicated by the work of a reviser who expanded the text with descriptive material, possibly from a Greek treatise of the second half of the thirteenth century.[2] But it is clear that in the original text the tree of life was depicted as an eschatological tree for food, the reward for the righteous in the new age (8:3, 9:1).

The author drew his imagery of paradise and its tree of life from Genesis. Three allusions to the Genesis paradise account occur in II Enoch 8: 1) Gen. 2:9, the tree of life in the midst of paradise. (8:3); 2) Gen. 2:10, the four rivers of Eden (8:2); 3) Gen. 3:24, the cherubim who guard the tree of life (8:8; cf. 30:1). The author has given the cherubim-guardians a new function: they serve the Lord with incessant sweet singing (and in text A number 300).

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[1] II Enoch has been assigned to the first half of the first century A.D. See R.H. Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, II, 429; and Pfeiffer, "The Literature and Religion of the Pseudepigrapha," IB, I, 435.

On the author's general method of scriptural exposition, cf. II Enoch 25-30 where the author presents a midrash on the creation story of Genesis.

[2] A. Vaillant has concluded that the first reviser of II Enoch amplified the account of paradise and the tree of life on the basis of a Greek treatise of the second half of the thirteenth century. See Vaillant, Le livre des secrets d'Hénoch, v-viii, 88-89. There is no question that II Enoch 8:4-6 includes late traditions (cf. Apoc. Paul 23), but it is doubtful if 8:3a is an addition by a reviser. Καὶ ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ παραδείσου is dependent on Gen. 2:9, not on a later tradition.

As in I Enoch 24-25 the author has restored the mythological colors of the tree of life and has given the tree a new prominence. All the paradise trees and fruits are fragrant, but the tree of life is characterized as a tree of "ineffable goodness and fragrance" (8:3; cf. I En. 24:4). The tree of life communicates life to those who smell its fragrance (cf. 3 Enoch 23:18), and its fruit is the food of immortality for the righteous (II Enoch 8:2).

There is a similarity in the description of the tree of life in 8:3-4 as gold-looking in form, vermilion, covers all and has the produce of all fruit with the stylized tree of the ancient Near East which was studded with lapis-lazuli and precious stones. But the description of the tree in II Enoch is possibly a literary embellishment added by a later reviser.[1]

An element of the description in II Enoch 8 which has mythological associations is the reference to the oil from the tree. In text B oil is continuously discharged from the fruit of an olive tree standing next to the tree of life (8:3). There is nothing in Genesis of an oil producing tree, but oil figures prominently in ancient Near East mythology as a source of healing and life.[2] The

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[1] Vaillant, Le livre des secrets d'Hénoch, 9.

[2] For discussion of Old Testament and ancient Near East parallels, see E.C. Quinn, The Quest of Seth for the Oil of Life, 24ff. See Widengren, "The King and the Tree of Life," 59.

connection of oil with the tree of life in II Enoch 8 may reflect a ritual practice of anointing such as is known from Gnostic sources.[1] According to II Enoch 22:8, Enoch was anointed with "sweet oil" when he arrived in heaven.[2]

II Enoch contains several diverse traditions concerning the location of paradise and the tree of life. II Enoch 8:3 preserves the older and more mythological tradition: "and in the midst of the trees that of life, in that place whereon the Lord rests when he goes up into paradise." The description of the tree of life as the resting place of God belongs to the mythological conception of paradise as the "garden of God." A similar tradition occurs in Jewish magical charms, and in Rabbinic and Christian literature.[3]

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1 In EPh 121:15-19 the tree of life in the midst of paradise is connected with the olive tree from which chrism is made for the resurrection; cf. Origen, Cels. 6.27. See L. Ginzberg, The Legends of the Jews, V, 119, n. 113. On the Mandean ritual use of oil, see E. Segelberg, Masbūtā: Studies in the Ritual of the Mandean Baptism (Uppsala, 1958), 71ff, 131ff.

2 Cf. the Book of Adam and Eve 40-42, a Christian interpolation, which states that Christ will lead Adam to the paradise tree of mercy when 5,500 years have passed and at that time will anoint with the "oil of mercy" all who believe in him. The "oil of mercy" for anointing is the oil of the tree of life.

3 In the Apocalypse of Paul 45 the Holy Spirit is said to have rested on the tree of life; cf. 3 Enoch 5:1 where the Shekina dwells upon a cherub under the tree of life. A late midrash on Genesis, Midrash Konen, represents the tree of life as the resting place of the righteous with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and representatives of every generation except Absalom under its shadow. See JE, IX, 516; cf. A. Jellinek, "Haggada to Genesis," Bet-ha-Midrash (Leipzig, 1857),4:1,28f.

Magical charms represent Davithea-Sabaoth-Jesus as lying on the bed of the tree of life: "I adjure thee, today Davithea, thou who

Both the statement that paradise is "between corruptibility and incorruptibility" (8:5, 6), and that the "root of the tree of life is in the garden at the earth's end" (8:4), may derive from the work of the reviser.[1] The latter statement preserves the conception of an earthly paradise and has a parallel in I Enoch 32:2f, 33:1, where the journey of Enoch to the earthly "garden of righteousness" at the end of the earth is described. In II Enoch 65:10 paradise is described as a place "bright and incorruptible," and is contrasted with the corruptible things" that will pass away (cf. 65:8, B text). The statement that paradise is "between corruptibility and incorruptibility" is linked with the location of paradise "at the earth's end" (8:4-5a), but may mean simply an intermediate place between heaven and earth.[2]

R.H. Charles suggested that the author may have attempted to bring the conception of an earthly and heavenly paradise into one organic conception in II Enoch 8.[3] If Vaillant is correct,[4] the additions of the reviser account for the diverse traditions not in

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liest there upon the bed of the tree of life." A.M. Kropp, Ausgewaehlte koptische Zaubertexte (Brussels, 1931), II, 104. W.E. Crum, Zaubertexte, I, xi, dates the above papyrus, No. 32, ca. 600 A.D. The charms are basically Jewish. Cf. E.R. Goodenough, Jewish Symbols, II, 166ff.

[1] Vaillant, Le livre des secrets d'Hénoch, 88f.

[2] Cf. Theophilus To Autolycus 2.24, where paradise is described as an intermediate place between earth and heaven; intermediate in beauty as man is intermediate in nature, neither wholly mortal nor altogether immortal. Note also Apoc. Moses 37:4f, 38:3f, 40:1f, where paradise is identified with the third heaven, the place where the righteous souls await the final judgment.

[3] R.H. Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, II, 434.

[4] See Vaillant, Le livre des secrets d'Hénoch, vff, 88f.

accord with the location of paradise and the tree of life in the third heaven, the conception which is the distinctive feature of the passage and the book.[1]

For the author of the original text the conception of an earthly paradise where the righteous live patriarchal lives (cf. I En. 25) has been replaced by the conception of paradise located in the third heaven: it is the shelter and eternal dwelling place of the righteous and is enclosed by an indestructible wall (65:8ff; cf. 42:3). This paradise is reserved for those who qualify with good works (9:1). Enoch is the only exception; he is taken beyond the third heaven and the dwelling place of the righteous to the highest heaven where the Lord is (67:2).

The Apocalypse of Moses.

The primary text is Apocalypse of Moses 28:1-4.

1) But the Lord turned to Adam and said: "I will not permit you to be in paradise from now on." 2) And Adam answered and said: "Lord, give me of the plant of life, that

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[1] Cf. II Cor. 12:2, 4, where Paul describes his experience of being caught up into the third heaven and into paradise. Repetition of the description is a type of parallelism and thus Paul appears to identify paradise with the third heaven; but it is questionable whether Paul knew the speculation concerning the seven heavens such as occurs in II Enoch 3-21 (cf. Test. Levi 2:7-3:8). On Jewish-Rabbinic speculation concerning the "three" and "seven" heavens, see Strack-Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch (Munich, 1954^{2}), III, 531-534.

I may eat before I am cast out." 3) Then the Lord said to Adam, "You shall not take from it now, for it has been appointed for the cherubim and the flaming sword which turns to guard it from you, in order that you should not taste of it and become immortal forever; but that you may have the war which the enemy has put in you; 4) But when you have gone out of paradise, if you keep yourself from all evil as being destined to die, I will raise you up when the resurrection comes, and then it shall be given to you of the tree of life, and you shall be immortal forever."[1]

Related texts: Apocalypse of Moses 13:1-4, 22:3f.

In the Apocalypse of Moses the Genesis account of paradise and the tree of life has been reinterpreted and recast in a new framework. The Apocalypse of Moses purports to be an account of the events from the time Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden to their burial. Genesis 2-5 forms the scriptural basis of the narrative,[2] but the Genesis account is loosely paraphrased and sometimes changed in meaning.

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[1] The translation is based on the Greek text in C. Tischendorf, Apocalypses Apocryphae (Lipsiae, 1866). The Greek text may be based on Hebrew or Aramaic sources. For discussion of possible mistranslations of a Semitic original, see C. Fuchs, "Das Leben Adams und Evas," Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments, ed. by E. Kautzsch, (Tuebingen, 1900), II, 511f. The Apocalypse of Moses has been dated in the middle of the first century A.D. Cf. Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, II, 126f.

[2] Cf. Apoc. Moses 4:1-2 with Gen. 4:25; 5:1 with Gen. 5:3ff; 7:1 with Gen. 2:16-17; 8:1 with Gen. 4:9.

Central elements in the narrative are the following: 1) the dying Adam sends his son Seth to paradise for a healing remedy (5:1ff); 2) the journey of Seth and Eve to the earthly paradise (10:1ff); 3) the healing remedy --- the oil of mercy from the tree of life (9:3; 13:1ff); 4) the promise that the righteous will be given of the tree of life in the world to come (13:2ff; 28:1ff). The central section of the work, chapters 15-34, contains Eve's version of the fall and is a midrashic exposition of Genesis 3.[1]

The account of the journey of Seth for a healing remedy has parallels with mythological texts from the ancient Near East like the Canaanite Legend of King Keret. In the Keret legend the dying father, Keret, sends his son, Elhu, to get his sister, Thitmanat, and a cure is effected by pouring oil into the earth and moulding loam into an image into which the sickness is transferred.[2] In the Epic of Gilgamesh there is a similar story pattern of a journey in search of immortality. Gilgamesh seeks his own immortality whereas Seth is motivated by his desire to help his dying father, Adam.

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[1] The text of Genesis 3 is followed almost verse by verse in commentary style, but is altered and at points changed in meaning; cf. Apoc. Moses 17:5 with Gen. 3:1-3; Apoc. Moses 18:3 with Gen. 3:4; contrast Gen. 3:6 with Apoc. Moses 19:1, where Eve is made to swear by the throne of God, by the cherubim and by the tree of life that she will give the fruit of the tree to her husband before she is permitted by the serpent to eat of the fruit herself.

[2] See Pritchard, ANET, 147-149; T.H. Gaster, "The Canaanite Epic of Keret," JQR, N.S. 37 (1946-47), 287; and G.R. Driver, Canaanite Myths and Legends (Edinburgh, 1956), 43-47.

There is also a similar theme of the inevitability of death: Gilgamesh loses even the plant of rejuvenation and Seth is denied his request for the healing oil of mercy. The myth of Adapa also bears certain similarities with the account of Seth's journey to paradise.[1]

In the Apocalypse of Moses both the words φυτόν and ξύλον are used for the tree of life (cf. 28:2 with 28:4); cf. Apoc. Moses 9:3 where δένδρον is used. The tree of knowledge is also depicted as a plant of knowledge; cf. Apoc. Moses 17:5 where Eve answers the serpent: ναὶ, ἀπὸ παντὸς φυτοῦ ἐσθίομεν παρὲξ ἑνὸς μόνου, ὅ ἐστιν ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ παραδείσου(cf. LXX Gen. 3:2, 3).[2] The word φυτόν is used a total of ten times and ξύλον six times.[3] In the LXX and pseudepigraphic writings ξύλον is with few exceptions the preferred term, but it is evident that there was a well established tradition with mythological roots which depicted the paradise tree of life as a plant.[4]

While there is no reference in Genesis 2-3 to the healing power of the tree of life or to its discharge of oil, in the Apocalypse of

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[1] See Pritchard, ANET, 101f.

[2] Other references: 7:1, 17:4, 18:5, 20:3.

[3] The word ξύλον is used three times of the tree of knowledge (7:3, 11:1, 18:1) and three times of the tree of life (19:3, 22:3, 28:4).

[4] In Josephus Antiquities I, 37-51, a freely paraphrased version of Gen. 2-3, the words ξύλον and δένδρον do not occur; φυτόν is used consistently as the term for the trees of life and knowledge; cf. I, 37, which paraphrases Gen. 2:8-9: "Moses states that God planted paradise to the east, abounding with all manner of plants; among these was also the plant of life and another of wisdom..."

Moses the healing oil from the tree forms one of the central elements in the narrative. Apoc. Moses 9:3: "Arise and go with our son Seth near paradise . . . and pray God to have mercy upon me and send his angel to paradise and give me of the tree from which the oil flows out of it and bring it to me and I shall anoint myself and I shall have rest." But Seth is informed that the oil of the paradise tree has been reserved for the last times following the resurrection (13:3). The function of the tree of life as the source of healing oil has parallels with II Enoch 8 where oil is discharged from the paradise springs (text A) and from an olive tree standing next to the tree of life (text B), but it is doubtful if the author of the Apoc. of Moses has drawn this tradition from II Enoch.[1]

In Eve's account of the fall, the tree of life is promised Adam before he is expelled from paradise. All the supplications of Adam and the angels to mitigate the harshness of his punishment are rejected but he does receive the promise that he will be given the tree of life in the new age if he keeps himself from all evil (28:4). The Genesis tree of life is reinterpreted as the eschatological tree by

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[1] L.S.A. Wells held that "there is little doubt that the author of the Apoc. of Moses is indebted to" II Enoch for his "conception of the tree of life and of the sacred oil." See Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, II, 126. But the reference to oil from the tree is the only point of similarity between the two accounts and this can be explained on grounds other than literary dependence. For Gnostic traditions concerning the oil from the tree of life, see above, 50, n.1.

paraphrasing Genesis 3:22, 24.

LXX Genesis 3:24, 22	Apoc. of Moses 28:3
ἔταξεν τὰ Χερουβίμ καὶ τὴν φλογίνην ῥομφαίαν τὴν στρεφομένην φυλάττειν τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς. Cf. Gen. 3:22, ... μήποτε ἐκτείνῃ τὴν χεῖρα καὶ λάβῃ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς καὶ φάγῃ καὶ ζήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.	ὡρίσθη γὰρ τοῖς Χερουβίμ καὶ τῇ φλογίνῃ ῥομφαίᾳ τῇ στρεφομένῃ φυλάττειν αὐτὸ διά σέ, ὅπως μὴ γεύσῃ δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀθάνατος ἔσῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ... τότε δοθήσεταί σοι ἐκ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς καὶ ἀθάνατος ἔσῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

Genesis 3:24b is cited from the LXX almost verbatim.[1] Genesis 3:22 is paraphrased to read: ὅπως μὴ γεύσῃ δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀθάνατος ἔσῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. "Tasting" of the tree of life will make Adam "immortal." The LXX translates the Hebrew וְחַי לְעֹלָם literally as ζήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. The use of ἀθάνατος ἔσῃ, "you shall be immortal," is complete without the redundant εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, but the author is citing from the LXX.

The addition of ἀθάνατος to the Genesis narrative is indicative of the theology of the author. The teaching of a bodily resurrection is implied in several passages including 28:4 where Adam is promised the tree of life (cf. 41:3; 43:2). But this teaching is

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[1] Most of the quotations in the Apoc. of Moses are from the LXX; see C. Fuchs, "Das Leben Adams und Evas," 511f.

modified by the concept of the immortality of the soul. The archangel Michael gives to Seth the rule to mourn no more than six days after a death, because on the seventh day God and his angels rejoice with the righteous soul who has passed away from the earth (43:3).

As in I Enoch 25 the judgment throne of God is located beside the tree of life in paradise (22:3). I Enoch 25 preserves the more mythological form of the tradition where the throne is located on the mountain paradise of God, but the Apocalypse of Moses assumes that paradise is the garden abode of God. The epiphany of the deity is symbolized by the flowering of the paradise plants.[1]

While the Genesis description of the tree of knowledge has at points been altered, the tree is depicted in essentially the same terms as in the Biblical account. It is the tree of disobedience and death of which God commanded Adam and Eve not to eat lest they die (7:1, 17:5). A new interpretation is given to the fruit of the tree of knowledge: Adam has an "evil heart" because the serpent poured upon the fruit of the tree of knowledge the poison of his wickedness, i.e. lust (19:3; cf. 28:3).

The author of the narrative has shifted the focus to the tree of life by depicting it in striking mythological terms. It is the mythical tree of healing which is denied Adam, and secondly, it becomes the eschatological reward for the righteous.

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[1] See E. Lohmeyer, "Vom goettlichen Wohlgeruch," 26ff.

The Targumic versions: Targum Onkelos (TO), Targum Pseudo-Jonathan (1TJ), and the Fragmentary Targum (2TJ).[1]

Genesis 2:9

TO And the Lord God caused to grow up from the earth
1TJ And the Lord God made to grow from the ground
2TJ . . .

TO every tree desirable to look at and good for food
1TJ every tree desirable to look at and good for food
2TJ . . .

TO and the tree of life in the midst of the garden
1TJ and the tree of life in the midst of the garden
2TJ . . .

TO
1TJ whose height was a journey of five hundred years
2TJ . . .

TO and the tree of whose fruit they who eat
1TJ and the tree of whose fruit they who eat
2TJ and the tree of knowledge, of which anyone who ate from it

TO know between good and evil.
1TJ recognize between good and evil.
2TJ would distinguish between good and evil.

Genesis 3:22

TO And the Lord God said:
1TJ And the Lord God said to the angels who ministered before him:
2TJ And the Word of the Lord God said:

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[1] For the text of Targum Onkelos, see A. Sperber, The Bible in Aramaic (Leiden, 1959), I. Other texts: M. Ginsburger, Pseudo-Jonathan (Berlin, 1903); M. Ginsburger, Das Fragmententhargum (Berlin, 1899).

TO Behold, Adam is alone in the world by himself
1TJ Behold, Adam is alone in the world
2TJ Behold, Adam whom I have created is alone in the world

TO . . .
1TJ as I am alone in the heavens above
2TJ as I am alone in the heavens above

TO . . .
1TJ and in the future there will arise from him
2TJ In the future a great people will arise from him;

TO knowing good and evil
1TJ those who will know to distinguish between good and evil
2TJ and from him will arise a people who will know to distinguish between good and evil

TO . . .
1TJ If he had kept the commandments which I appointed to him, he would have lived and endured like the tree of life forever.
2TJ . . .

TO and now,
1TJ and now, because he has not kept what I commanded
2TJ and now,

TO . . .
1TJ we will prohibit him and keep him from the garden of Eden
2TJ we will expel him from the garden of Eden

TO lest he stretch forth his hand
1TJ before he stretch forth his hand
2TJ before he stretch forth his hand

TO and take also from the tree of life
1TJ and take also from the fruit of the tree of life.
2TJ and take from the fruit of the tree of life

TO and eat and live forever.
1TJ Behold, if he eats from it, he shall live and endure forever.
2TJ and eat and live forever.

Genesis 3:24

TO And he expelled Adam
1TJ And he expelled Adam
2TJ And he expelled Adam

TO and he caused to dwell
1TJ and he caused to dwell the glory of his Shekinah
2TJ and he caused to dwell the glory of his Shekinah

TO at the east of the garden of Eden the cherubim
1TJ at the east of the garden of Eden between the two cherubim
2TJ at the east before the garden of Eden among the two cherubim

TO . . .
1TJ Before he created the world, he created the law.
2TJ Two thousand years before he created the world he created the law.

TO . . .
1TJ He prepared the garden of Eden for the righteous
2TJ He prepared the garden of Eden for the righteous

TO . . .
1TJ that they should eat and delight themselves
2TJ that they whould eat and delight themselves

TO . . .
1TJ from the fruit of the tree
2TJ from the fruit of its tree

TO . . .
1TJ because they served in their lives with the teaching of the law (in this world) and they fulfilled its commands.
2TJ because they observed the commandments of the law in this world.

TO . . .
1TJ He prepared Gehinnam for the wicked
2TJ He prepared Gehinnam for the wicked

TO and the sharp sword which revolved
1TJ which is like the sharp consuming sword with two edges;
2TJ which is like the sharp consuming sword with two edges;

TO . . .
1TJ he prepared in the midst of it sparks of fire
2TJ he prepared in the midst of it sparks of fire

TO . . .
1TJ and burning coals of fire for the judgment against the wicked
2TJ and burning coals from the fires for the wicked for their punishment in the world to come

TO . . .
1TJ who rebelled in their lives against the teaching of the law
2TJ because they observed not the commandments of the law in this world

TO . . .
1TJ . . .
2TJ But (the fruit of) the tree of life is the law; all who observe it in this world shall live and endure like the tree of life in the world to come.

TO . . .
1TJ It is good to serve the law and walk in the paths
2TJ It is good to serve the law and observe

TO to guard the way to the tree of life.
1TJ of the way of life (and) of the fruit of the tree of life
2TJ its commands as the fruit of the tree of life

TO . . .
1T J which the Word of the Lord prepared, that in keeping it he will endure in the world to come.
2TJ in the world to come.

Comparison of the above three targumic accounts with the Masoretic text of Genesis shows that Targum Onkelos gives an almost literal translation while Pseudo-Jonathan and the Fragmentary Targum give similar paraphrastic expositions of Gen. 2:9, 3:22, 24. The Fragmentary Targum and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan both have material

independent of each other but share a common exegetical tradition in which paradise and the tree of life are eschatological rewards for the righteous.[1]

The new element introduced in the exposition of Genesis 2:9 is the reference to the height of the tree of life. According to Pseudo-Jonathan the height is a journey of five hundred years רומיה מהלך חמש מאה שנין. In Jewish Gnosticism there was discussion of the mystical ascent to paradise and its trees; cf. Hagiga 14b where the four eminent scholars Ben Zoma, Ben Azzai, Elisha ben Abuya and Rabbi Akiba are said to have journeyed to paradise with disastrous

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[1] The Palestinian Targum of the Pentateuch never had an official, uniform text. Jerusalem 1, or Pseudo-Jonathan, is dated in the seventh century A.D. and Jerusalem 2, or Fragmentary Targum, is possibly older, but both exhibit elements of translation and Halakhah which go back to an early period, perhaps as early as the first centuries of the Christian era. See BJ. Roberts, The Old Testament Text and Versions (Cardiff, 1951), 200ff.

P. Kahle regards the Fragmentary Targum as a collection of midrashic material from the Palestinian Targum which people did not want to lose after the Targum Onkelos had become the authoritative Targum in Palestine. P.E. Kahle, The Cairo Geniza (Oxford, 1959[2]), 202f. A. Marmorstein held a recension theory: "Beide Targumim, das Fragmententargum wie das Ps.-Jonathantargum sind nur verschiedene Ueberarbeitungen des Targum Jerushalmi." He has argued that it was unavoidable that the old Jerusalem Targum should be retained only in fragmentary or revised form since its Halakhah was out of date and in need of revision. Targum Onkelos was one such revision. A. Marmorstein, "Einige vorlaeufige Bemerkungen zu den neuentdeckten Fragmenten des jerusalemischen (palaestinensischen) Targums," ZAW, 49 N.F. 8 (1931), 234.

For a summary and criticism of the position of Kahle and pupils, and discussion of the newly discovered Neofiti I and its significance, see A. Diez Macho, "The Recently Discovered Palestinian Targum: Its Antiquity and Relationship with the other Targums," Congress Volume Oxford 1959, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum, 7 (1960), 222-245.

results. But the reference in Pseudo-Jonathan to the height of the tree does not stem from a Merkabah speculation on the nature of paradise. The emphasis on its great height parallels the description of the paradise tree in texts like Ezekiel 31 where the mythological colors of the tree of life have been revived (Ezek. 31:3, 5, 8; cf. OW 158:17f; 1QH 6:16f).[1]

The Fragmentary Targum and Targum Ps.-Jonathan on Genesis 3:24 interpret paradise and the tree of life in terms similar to those of Jewish apocalyptic literature, i.e. as eschatological rewards for the righteous.[2]

1TJ on Gen. 3:24
צתקין גינתא דעדן לצדיקייא דייכלון ויתפנקון
מן פירי אילנא

He prepared the garden of Eden for the righteous that they should eat and delight themselves from the fruit of the tree.

But this promise of paradise and the tree of life is made contingent upon observing the teaching of the law. The righteous shall receive these things "because they served in their lives with the teaching of the law in this world and fulfilled its commands" (1TJ on Gen. 3:24).

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[1] The targumic tradition of the height of the tree of life may be the basis of the commentary on Gen. 2:9 in the Genesis Rabbah 15:6 where the 500 years journey is further explained as a reference to the trunk as well as the branches of the tree.

[2] But a new element is the reference to Gehinnam in this context as the place of punishment for the wicked, i.e. for those who rebelled against the teaching of the law. The flaming sword of Gen. 3:24 is now used as a simile for Gehinnam.

The targumic exposition focuses attention on Adam's disobedience of the command of God. In Pseudo-Jonathan on Gen. 3:22 it is pointed out that if Adam had kept the commandments he would have lived and endured forever like the tree of life. Thus, the targumic account relates Adam's failure to obtain the tree of life to his disobedience in eating of the tree of knowledge. The tree of life is interpreted as a reward Adam would have received, not as a false means of obtaining immortality (cf. Gen. 3:22).

The distinctive feature of the targumic exposition of Genesis 3:22, 24, is the identification of the law with the tree of life.

2TJ on Gen. 3:24

ברם (פירי) אילן חייא היא אוריתא כל
מאן דמנטר יהיה [יהה] בעלמא הדין
הוי חי וקים כאילן חייא לעלמא דאתי

But the fruit of the tree of life is the law; all who observe it in this world shall live and endure like the tree of life in the world to come.[1]

The identification of the law with the "fruit" of the tree of life means that the righteous already partake of the tree of life. This aspect parallels the Gnostic interpretation of the tree of life, i.e. immortality, as a present possession.

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[1] Cf. Ps. of Solomon 14:2-3 where the righteous who live in the law are identified as "trees of life." In the Targums the phrase כאילן חייא, "as the tree of life," is best understood as a simile where the righteous are compared with the tree of life (cf. Ps. 1:3), rather than an allegorical type identification such as in Ps. of Solomon 14.

The Fragmentary Targum states that it is "good to serve the law and observe its commands as the fruit of the tree of life in the world to come." But the parallel passage in Ps.-Jonathan makes the tree of life a simile for the Torah which can be equated with the paths of the way of life (cf. Pirke R. Eliezer 12). In the Talmud the tree of life from Proverbs 3:18 is identified with the law in a non-eschatological context where it becomes a mere simile for the law (Taanith 7a; but cf. Pirke Aboth 6:7). Thus, as a symbol for the Torah, the tree of life lost all mythological meaning and became a dead image. But this has not yet occurred in Ps.-Jonathan or in the Fragmentary Targum where eating of the fruit of the tree of life is promised the righteous who observe the law. The new aspect parallel to Gnostic texts is that this mythical fruit is available now in the Torah.

The Genesis Rabbah and Pesikta Rab Kahana preserve traditions concerning the tree of life related to the targumic accounts and may give an indication of their date. The Genesis Rabbah 15:6 attributes the description of the tree of life as a journey of five hundred years (cf. 1TJ on Gen. 2:9) to Rabbi Judah ben Il'ai, a third generation Tanna (ca. 130-160 A.D.). According to the Pesikta, R. Judah ben Il'ai taught that the tree of life would have given life forever to Adam if he had not sinned and eaten of the tree of knowledge (cf. 1TJ

on Gen. 3:22).[1] The commentary in Genesis Rabbah 15:6 does not create the tradition concerning the height of the tree of life but explains its meaning. Rabbi Judah ben Il'ai, a pupil of Akiba, must have known the targumic exposition of Gen. 2:9, 3:22-24, or a tradition similar to that recorded in the Fragmentary Targum and in Pseudo-Jonathan.

Evaluation.

Although based on earlier mythological traditions, the paradise account of Genesis presents a distinctive Hebrew witness which shifts the focus away from a mythical food or plant of life and emphasizes that death resulted from Adam's disobedience of God's command. The tree of knowledge is made the test of Adam's obedience, not the tree of life which appears as a factor in the narrative only after the account of Adam's fall. The tree of life is presented in faded mythological colors as a false means of obtaining eternal life (Gen. 3:22).

But in the Jewish works examined above the tree of life has been given a new prominence and a new eschatological role which is marked by a resurgence of the more mythological dimension of the tree of

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[1] R. Judah ben Il'ai said: Should a man ask you, If Adam had not sinned and had eaten of that tree, would he have lived and endured forever? answer him, There was Elijah, who did not sin; he lives and endures forever. S. Buber, Pesikta (Lyck, 1868), 76a.

life.[1] Mythological elements which are revived and given a new importance are the following: 1) the eating of the fruit of the tree of life; 2) the fragrance of the tree; 3) the association of the tree with oil for anointing; 4) the function of the tree as a source of healing and rejuvenation.

The mythical idea that eternal life can be obtained through the eating of a material substance, e.g. in the Adapa Myth, is a central element in the Jewish interpretation of the tree of life. The fruit of the tree of life is the food of immortality. This conception of the tree is alluded to in Gen. 3:22 where Adam is prevented from eating from the tree of life lest he "live forever." Jewish interpreters have picked up this element in the Genesis narrative and have made it the central point of their interpretation. According to the Apocalypse of Moses even Adam will be given the right to eat from the tree of life if he keeps himself from all evil (28:4). But eating from the tree is now an eschatological reward. The more Gnostic aspect that eating from the tree is a present possibility occurs only in the Qumran identification of the eternal planting as

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[1] The texts examined above may be placed in three groups on the basis of their use of Genesis: 1) Midrash and paraphrastic exposition: Apoc. of Moses 28; Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Fragmentary Targum on Gen. 2:9, 3:22, 24; II Enoch 8; 2) Harmonization and synthesis: I Enoch 24-25; 1QH 8:4-14; 3) Definite allusion: Test. of Levi 18:10f; II Esdras 8:52. In the first group there is no question that Genesis is the primary source drawn upon, while in the second group other Biblical texts and traditions have also been utilized.

the paradise tree and the targumic identification of the law with the fruit of the tree of life.

The mythical conception of the divine fragrance of the paradise trees is revived in the Jewish interpretation of the tree of life. This element does not occur in Genesis 2-3, but becomes an important feature of the Jewish interpretation. In I Enoch 24-25 the tree of life is described as the most fragrant of the paradise trees, and in II Enoch 8:3 it is described as a tree of "ineffable goodness and fragrance." According to I Enoch 25:6 the fragrance of the tree of life will be in the bones of the righteous in the new age.

The association of the tree of life with oil for anointing, an element with mythological and religious associations, becomes an important feature in the Apocalypse of Moses. In II Enoch 8 there is a reference to an olive tree next to the tree of life which continuously discharges oil (text B). The same tradition occurs in the Gnostic Gospel of Philip (121:15ff), but the olive tree is ascribed the function of providing oil for the sacrament of chrism. The myth of the tree of life grew by absorbing new elements like the oil from the olive tree which in turn were reinterpreted and given new meanings in later usage.

The healing power of the tree of life is another mythological element not mentioned in the Genesis account, but which is given a new importance in Jewish apocalyptic literature. In Mesopotamian

materials the plant of life was conceived of as a plant of rejuvenation, a plant which restores lost youthfulness to the person who eats it (Gilgamesh Epic). In Ezekiel 47:12 the leaves of the paradise trees are for healing and 2 Esdras 7:123 similarly describes the fruit of paradise as possessing a healing power. This mythological conception is given special prominence in the Apoc. of Moses and stands behind the references in I Enoch 25 to the fragrance and life-giving nature of the tree of life in the new age. Those who eat of the tree of life will have its fragrance in their bones and will no longer suffer sickness or death.

The magical power of the tree of life appears as a motif independent of the Genesis paradise account in Pseudo-Philo Biblical Antiquities 11:15 where Moses is shown the tree of life and a branch is cut from it to sweeten the waters of Marah. The tree of life became merely a simile for the Torah in later Rabbinical literature (cf. Ta'anith 7a), but in Pseudo-Philo it still retains its mythological content and has not yet become a dead image. This use of the tree of life in Pseudo-Philo is without close parallels in Jewish or Gnostic literature.

The tree of knowledge remains a symbol of death and disobedience in Jewish literature, but various attempts were made to explain the nature of the tree and its fruit; e.g. Apoc. of Moses 19:3, where the serpent is said to have poured upon the fruit of the tree

the poison of his wickedness which is lust.[1] The tree of knowledge was interpreted as a vine and its fruit as bunches of grapes (Apoc. Abr. 23; 3 Baruch 4:9ff; T.B. Berakoth 40a; T.B. Sanhedrin 70a).

An interpretation of the tree of knowledge which has parallels with Gnostic exegesis of Genesis occurs in the Book of Adam and Eve 29:2. Adam tells Seth that he received the secret revelation of future events when he ate from the tree. In I Enoch 32 the tree of knowledge also receives a positive interpretation. Its fruit is said to bestow "great wisdom" on those who eat it. As these two passages show, a positive interpretation of the tree of knowledge is not unique to Gnostic exegesis.

A theological presupposition which enters into the interpretation of the diverse texts examined above is the understanding of Israel as the peculiar possession of Yahweh, his elect people. The classic Biblical passage which expresses this religious conviction occurs in Deut. 7:6-7 where the choice of Israel is grounded in the initiative of Yahweh. The identification of Israel as the "vineyard of Yahweh" and the men of Judah as his "pleasant planting"(Isa. 5:7) is part of this religious conviction which reaches a high point in the Deutero-Isaiah language of election (cf. Isa. 41:8-9). The imagery of tree, vine and planting occurs frequently in connection

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[1] For other references, see L. Ginzberg, Legends of the Jews, V, 97f.

with the conception of Israel as an elect nation chosen and protected by Yahweh (cf. Isa. 60:21; LXX Isa. 65:22f; I En. 10:15; 93:2, 5, 10; Jub. 1:16).

It is this religious conviction of Israel as Yahweh's chosen people which helps give shape to the visions of the restoration of paradise and the tree of life in the new age. The author of the Hodayot knows that God has placed him in the "lot" of the righteous and appointed him for salvation. Thus, in 1QH 8:4ff he gives thanks that God has placed him at a fountain in the midst of the wilderness which waters trees of life and the eternal planting for the blessing of all the elect. Less subjective, but the expression of a similar religious conviction is the targumic identification of the righteous who observe the law as the recipients of the paradise tree of life. In I Enoch 25:5 it is specifically stated that the fruit of the tree of life will be food "for the elect," i.e. the righteous and holy. According to I Enoch and the targums paradise and the tree of life were prepared before the creation of the world and promised to the righteous (I En. 25:7; 1TJ on Gen. 3:24). Paradise and the tree of life, as eschatological symbols, are used to express the conviction that Yahweh has chosen Israel and will continue to be active on her behalf.

In summary, two central factors have entered into the interpretation of the Genesis tree of life in Jewish literature. In the

first place, the mythical tree of life becomes the eschatological tree which shall feed the elect in the new age. This interpretation of the tree of life is marked by the revival of specific mythological features such as the divine fragrance of the tree. Secondly, the understanding of Israel as Yahweh's chosen people is an important theological presupposition which has entered into Jewish exposition of Genesis 2-3 and has helped to produce a distinctive Jewish interpretation of the Genesis tree of life.

Chapter III
Philo of Alexandria: The Tree of Virtue
Introduction

The history of interpretation of Genesis 2:9 enters a new phase with the work of Philo of Alexandria. Philo insists that the Genesis paradise account, and in particular Genesis 2:9, must be interpreted allegorically. Philo's use of allegory is not unique, but his interpretation of the paradise trees is particularly striking. He presents his interpretation of Genesis 2:9 in three key works: De Opificio Mundi, Legum Allegoria, and Quaestiones in Genesin.

In Quaestiones Philo's method is a verse by verse commentary in which he gives both a literal and an allegorical meaning to the text. Each section is usually introduced by a general question as to the meaning of the verse which is followed by a citation of the verse and the twofold interpretation. In Legum Allegoria Philo formally cites Genesis 2:9 but gives only an allegorical interpretation. He dismisses the literal interpretation of paradise and the tree of life as a wrong principle of interpretation.

In Legum Allegoria Philo writes for those Jews initiated in his method and purpose whereas in De Opificio Mundi Philo has a Gentile audience in mind. He attempts to impress the Gentile reader by showing that in Moses' account of creation the best pagan cosmology

and metaphysics is set forth.[1] While Philo does not follow a rigid pattern of citation and exegesis in De Opificio Mundi, he paraphrases and follows the text of Genesis 2 with obvious care. The interpretation of Genesis 2:9 in De Opificio Mundi 154-156 is a key for understanding Philo's theory of virtue and his interpretation of the tree of life in his other writings.

The Genesis paradise account underwent a thorough reinterpretation at the hands of both Jewish apocalyptic circles and Gnostic interpreters. Philo differs from the interpretation of both of these groups at the same point: ethical content. Philo's interpretation of Genesis 2:9 may be examined under two separate but related categories: 1) the ethical interpretation of the tree of life; 2) the tree of life as a symbol of man.

Philo of Alexandria: the Texts.

De Opificio Mundi 154-156

154) These statements appear to me to be intended symbolically rather than literally; for no trees of life or of knowledge have ever at any time existed on earth, nor is it likely that they will appear in the future. But Moses evidently means by paradise to signify the

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[1] E.R. Goodenough, An Introduction to Philo Judaeus (New Haven, 1940), 45.

ruling power of the soul which is full of countless opinions, as it might be of plants; and by the tree of life he signifies reverence toward God, the greatest of the virtues, by means of which the soul is made immortal; while by the tree which had the knowledge of good and evil, he signifies moral prudence, the virtue that occupies the middle position, by means of which things by nature contrary to one another are distinguished.[1]

155) Having set up these boundaries in the soul, he watched like a judge, to see to which it would tend to go. And when he saw that it had a tendency to wickedness and was little inclined to holiness or godly fear, by which an immortal life is won, he cast it out as we might expect, and drove it from paradise, giving the soul which had committed such desperate and irremedial offenses no hope of a subsequent return. . .

156) For their (Adam and Eve) conduct deserved wrath since they had passed by the plant of immortal life, the complete perfection of virtue, from which they might have enjoyed a long and happy life, and chose the ephemeral and

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[1] Translations are based on the text of L. Cohn and P. Wendland, Philonis Alexandrini Opera Quae Supersunt (Berlin, 1896-1930), I , II.

mortal which is not life but time full of misery; and, accordingly, the Father appointed for them punishments that were fitting.

Legum Allegoria I, 59-61

59) But the tree of life is virtue in the most comprehensive sense, which some call goodness. From it the particular virtues are derived. And it is for this reason that it is situated in the midst of paradise, having the most important position, in order that it may, like a king, be guarded by those on either side . . .

60) Concerning this tree he (Moses) expressly says that it is in the midst of paradise, but concerning the other tree, that of the knowledge of good and evil, he has not made it clear whether it is inside or outside of paradise, but after the phrase "and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" he is immediately silent, not making it clear where it was placed . . .

61) . . . For upon the soul, which is only one, the unspeakably many impressions of all things in the universe are borne. When, therefore, it receives the stamp of perfect virtue, it becomes the tree of life, but when it receives that of wickedness, it becomes the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

De Plantatione 44

And he (Moses) says very carefully, not of the man made after the image of God, but of the man formed out of earth, that he was placed in paradise. For the man stamped with the spirit according to the image of God, differs not at all, as it appears to me, from the tree which bears the fruit of immortal life; for both are incorruptible and have been counted worthy of the most central and most important part; for it is said that the tree of life is in the midst of paradise.

Legum Allegoria III 52, 107

52) But secondly, that which is said is equivalent to this: "Where have you been, O soul?" When God invited you to a participation in virtue, are you going after wickedness, and when he offered for enjoyment the tree of life, that is of wisdom by which you might live, have you entered into ignorance and corruption, preferring misery, the death of the soul, to happiness, the true life.

107) . . . For God placed virtue, the tree of life, as a standard and law for the soul. This is removed by the person who has fixed as a standard in its place wickedness, the tree of death.

Quaestiones in Genesin I 6

> But as for the tree of life in the midst (of the garden), it is the knowledge, not only of things on the earth, but also of the eldest and highest cause of all things. For if anyone is able to obtain a clear impression of this, he will be fortunate and blessed and truly immortal.[1]

The Ethical Interpretation of the tree of Life.

Philo interprets the tree of life and the tree of knowledge as symbols of the two opposite directions of life which man must choose between. The former is the path of virtue with life and immortality as its end and the latter is the path of evil which ends in the death of the soul (cf. Plant. 36f). In De Opificio Mundi, a treatise in which Philo reads Hellenistic cosmology and metaphysics into the first three chapters of Genesis, Philo presents this ethical interpretation of Genesis 2:9 in a concise form.

In Opif. 154 paradise is interpreted as the ruling power of the soul, τὸ ἡγεμονικόν.[2] However, paradise may also be

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[1] Ralph Marcus, Philo, Supplement I, Questions and Answers on Genesis (Cambridge, 1953).

[2] In Stoic thought the ἡγεμονικόν is the dominant part of the soul, the logos in us, which gives power to the senses. See E.R. Goodenough, By Light, Light (New Haven, 1935), 376-378.

In QG I 10 Philo refers to an interpretation which identified the tree of life with the Stoic ἡγεμονικόν. The tree of life is interpreted as the "principle of leadership" in the soul which innervates and strengthens sense perception for action.

understood as wisdom or knowledge of the divine and human and of their causes (QG I 6), as the place of virtue (Cher. 10), or as virtue itself (LA I 45). Since it is impious to suppose that God had planted paradise and cultivates it as a gardner, paradise must be explained allegorically.[1] God sows and plants earthly virtue in the human race as a copy and representation of the heavenly virtue (LA I 43, 45). Man is the microcosm (ὁ βραχὺς Κόσμος) by virtue of his soul. In the soul God has planted many trees which are the faculties that have the capacity to bear fruit (Plant. 28-31). The garden of Eden or paradise is best understood as the soul of man and the trees in paradise are the virtues which lead the soul to perfect happiness and immortality (cf. Plant. 37).

According to Opif. 154 the tree of life and the tree of knowledge are ὅροι , "boundaries," "demarcations," in the soul which represent the two opposite ways or tendencies. The tree of life is the greatest of virtues θεοσέβεια , "piety," and is the means by which the soul attains to immortality. As the fundamental virtue the tree of life may also be termed "goodness" (LA I 59)

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[1] Philo offers several objections to a literal interpretation of paradise and its trees of life and knowledge including the argumentum ad absurdum should God the Creator and first Cause plant a garden and fruit trees for himself (Plant. 32ff). In Plant. 35 Philo notes that an allegorical interpretation of Gen. 2:8f is required in order to avoid anthropomorphic and anthropopathic descriptions of God. But in Opif. 154 Philo points out that the text itself (Gen. 2:9) requres an allegorical rather than a literal interpretation.

and from it proceed the four cardinal virtues of prudence, courage, self-control and justice (φρόνησις, ἀνδρία, σωφροσύνη, δικαιοσύνη), just as the four rivers proceed from Eden (LA I 63ff).[1]

The tree of knowledge is both the tree of moral prudence, φρόνησις, and the symbol of wickedness, Κακία (Opif. 154f).[2] The fatal sin of man lay in his confused choice of the tree of knowledge rather than the tree of life. God placed these two boundary markers in the soul and then watched as a judge to ascertain to which the soul would incline. When God saw that the soul was inclining toward wickedness, the tree of knowledge, and despising godliness and piety, the tree of life, he expelled the soul from paradise with no hope of return (Opif. 155).

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[1] The four virtues are the cardinal virtues of Platonism. Philo is undecided whether ἀπάθεια , dispassionateness (LA III 45), or moderation (Abr. II 137) indicates the truly virtuous condition.

[2] Cf. De Somniis II 70: "Observe that Adam, that mass of earth, is doomed to die when he touches the twofold tree (τοῦ διδύμου ξύλου). Wendland gives a reference to Genesis 2:9 in his text which implies that the twofold tree combines the tree of life with the tree of knowledge. But I agree with F.H. Colson that only the tree of knowledge is meant; twofold because it is the knowledge of good and evil. See F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, Philo (1934), V, 608.

The twofold nature of the tree of knowledge is elaborated in other texts: cf. LA I 101f, where the tree is the cause of good and evil. In QG I 15 Philo comments on the tree of knowledge as containing the mixture of good and evil, the combination which is a mixture of death.

The tree of knowledge is thus both φρόνησις and Κακία , the combination of good and evil which leads to death.

According to Opif. 156 the tree or "plant," φυτόν , of immortal life could have given to Adam and Eve happiness. However, because they chose to eat of the tree of knowledge they received rather a mortal existence which is not an existence but a time full of misery. It is by means of the tree of life, the complete perfection (παντέλεια) of virtue, that the soul becomes immortal and has εὐδαιμονία .[1]

In Legum Allegoria III 107 Philo reduces this interpretation of the two paradise trees to almost a stereotyped formula. The tree of life is ἀρετή , the "standard" and law that God has set for the soul.[2] The tree of knowledge is ξύλον θανάτου , the "standard" of wickedness, ὅρον κακίαν. A parallel use of this stereotyped interpretation occurs in LA III 52 where Philo paraphrases the question ποῦ εἶ (Gen. 3:9) to ask: "when God invited you to a participation in virtue, are you going after wickedness, and when he offered for enjoyment the tree of life, that is of wisdom (σοφία)

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[1] In contrast with Jewish apocalyptic literature, Philo does not elaborate the promise of happiness after death (cf. I En. 25:6). Though he mentions the idea occasionally, as in Opif. 156, the idea was not at all important to him. See H. Windisch, Die Froemmigkeit Philos (Leipzig, 1909), 100.

[2] In classical Greek ὅρος is in the first place a "boundary," or "landmark" (Hom. Iliad 12, 421); but the word can also mean "standard," or "measure;" cf. Demosthenes, De Corona 296, where freedom and independence are called the "standard" and canon of the good things of former times; and Arist. Politics 1294, 10, where ἀρετή is the "standard," the defining factor of aristocracy. The meaning "standard" fits the context in LA III 107 better than "boundary" or "landmark," especially in the parallel use of ὅρος with νόμος .

by which you might live . . . do you prefer misery, the death of the soul, to happiness, the true life?" Philo parallels virtue with the tree of life and wickedness with the death of the soul. The tree of life is now the tree of "wisdom" while the tree of knowledge is the tree of death, the symbol of the death of the soul.

Philo's interpretation of the two paradise trees demonstrates his transformation of the classical ἀρετή concept.[1] The tree of life as generic virtue, goodness or piety, is not only the first of the virtues but is the source from which the cardinal virtues flow. While Philo retains and praises the four cardinal virtues of the Stoic and Platonic tradition, their content has become ambiguous. They are now subsumed under the general category "goodness" and linked to the tree of life as examples of the choice confronting the soul (LA I 65ff).

In contrast with the Greek emphasis on self-perfection, in Philo virtue is not the result of personal achievement. One of the frequent themes that runs through Philo's exegesis of Genesis 2-3 is the statement that virtue originates and is implanted in the soul by God. The self can claim the role of "planting" virtue, but by doing so shows itself to be without God and full of self-love. The soul

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[1] For discussion of the transformation of the concept of virtue in Philo, see H. Jonas, The Gnostic Religion (Boston, 1963^2), 278.

which says "I plant," is guilty of "impiety" (LA I 49); virtue has been perverted into wickedness. The Greek emphasis on self-perfection and confidence in one's own moral powers is thus condemned as self-love and impiety.

While the Greek concept of virtue is radically modified, it is this philosophic tradition which explains several features of Philo's exegesis of Genesis 2:9. For Philo the tree of life is the way of ἀρετή which leads to εὐδαιμονία . According to Socratic teaching virtue, as knowledge of the good, brings about the appropriate action which results in happiness or well-being. Happiness, εὐδαιμονία , is the necessary result of virtue.[1] This presupposition of the Stoic and Platonic schools informs Philo's description of the tree of life as a symbol of virtue, the path that leads the soul to perfect happiness (Plant. 37). The tree of life as the source of virtue is the wisdom and knowledge of the good which leads to εὐδαιμονία (LA III 52; cf. QG I 6).

Philo's use of Greek philosophic traditions is also involved in the description of the tree of knowledge as both κακία and φρόνησις . According to Aristotle φρόνησις , "prudence," weighs exactly the benefit and harm that will result from the action

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[1] See W. Windelband, A History of Philosophy (New York, 1901), I, 81.

and chooses accordingly (Ethics N. 6, 4f). In QG I 11 Philo explains the tree of knowledge in similar terms: "For, as he intimates, it is prudence, and this is the science of knowing, through which good and beautiful things and bad and ugly things are distinguished . . ." But Philo goes on to explain that man's wisdom and ability to discern and distinguish between things is impaired. Man's wisdom is mixed with a deception which confuses things (QG I 11). The tree of knowledge is a symbol of this mixture: it is the tree of good and evil which leads to death (QG I 15).

Philo's exegesis of Genesis 2:9 involves a deprecation of man's wisdom and moral powers and a heightening of God's activity and power.[1] The tree of knowledge is the way of man's wisdom; it is the tree of death. The tree of life, on the other hand, is the tree of virtue which God has implanted in the soul; it is the tree of wisdom and happiness.

The Tree of Life as a Symbol of Man.

Philo's radical modification of the Greek concept of virtue presupposes a shift of its anthropological foundations. For Philo the tree of life can even be equated with the man created in the

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[1] Cf. LA III 136, where Philo says that the soul should not ascribe to itself its toil for virtue, but should refer it to God who gives the "love" (ἔρος) for virtue.

image of God (Gen. 1:27), but not with the man formed out of the earth (Gen. 2:7). While the latter has the possibility of becoming the tree of life, he cannot achieve this goal by his own efforts. In Greek philosophy from Plato to Plotinus man's way to God led through moral self-perfection, but for Philo it leads through self-despair in the awareness of one's nothingness:[1] "for as I have said, the treasures of evil are in ourselves; with God are those of good things only" (Fug. 79).

Philo's anthropology rests on the Platonic theory of ideas.[2] He posits an archetypal heavenly man which exists as the pattern of the earthly man. At the conclusion of the work of creation God "made" (ἐποίησεν) the heavenly man in the image of God (Gen. 1: 27). God "formed" (ἔπλασεν) the earthly man, the man of Gen. 2:7, not by the Logos alone, but by the aid of lower potencies and thus he was subject to the possibility of sinning.

In Opif. 134 Philo makes a sharp distinction between the heavenly man and the earthly man.[3] The man of Genesis 2:7 is an

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[1] H. Jonas, The Gnostic Religion, 280f.

[2] See J. Drummond, Philo Judaeus: The Jewish-Alexandrian Philosophy in its development and completion (London, 1888), II, 274ff.

[3] Cf. LA I 31ff, where Philo also differentiates sharply between the man created after the image of God in Gen. 1:27 and the earthly man in Gen. 2:7. But Philo also uses Gen. 1:27 as well as Gen. 2:7 to affirm the God like nature of man's rational soul (cf. Her. 230-231, Opif. 69). See R. Baer, Philo's Use of the Categories Male and Female (Unpublished Harvard Ph.D. thesis, 1965), 36-42.

object of sense perception, αἰσθητός, has body and soul, is male or female, by nature mortal, θνητός , and is not created κατ' εἰκόνα θεοῦ . The man of Gen. 1:27 is an ἰδέα , γένος and σφραγίς , an object of thought, νοητός , without body, neither male nor female, by nature incorruptible, ἄφθαρτος .

In De Plantatione 44 the tree of life bears fruit which is both ἄφθαρτος and ἀθάνατος and according to Moses it stands ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ παραδείσου(Gen. 2:9). Philo equates the man of Gen. 1:27 with the tree of life on the basis that both are imperishable and incorruptible and have been accounted worthy of the most central portion.

De Plantatione 44

ὁ μὲν γὰρ τῷ κατὰ τὴν εἰκόνα θεοῦ χαραχθεὶς πνεύματι οὐδὲν διαφέρει τοῦ τὴν ἀθάνατον ζωὴν καρποφοροῦντος, ὡς ἔμοιγε φαίνεται, δένδρου — ἄμφω γὰρ ἄφθαρτα καὶ μοίρας τῆς μεταιτάτης καὶ ἡγεμονικωτάτης ἠξίωται. λέγεται γὰρ ὅτι τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς ἐστιν ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ παραδείσου.

While the man of Gen. 1:27 is a tree of life, the man of Gen. 2:7 is identical to the earthly composite body (Plant. 44). The earthly man is ὁ μέσος νοῦς , the middle or neutral mind who has the high calling to decide between the forces drawing it in different directions. The "nous" is naked or stands midway as

long as it has not decided either for wickedness or for virtue. This state of latency is a kind of moral neutrality or moral indecision which man quickly leaves. The choice man faces is between immortality and a dishonorable death (Plant. 45).

Both the man of Gen. 1:27 and the man of Gen. 2:7 were placed in the garden of Eden. The former has his sphere not only in the planting of virtues, but is their tiller and guardian. "Tilling" means practising, and "guarding" means remembering (LA I 89). The earthly man neither "tills" the virtues nor "guards" them, but is only introduced to the truths and will presently become a refugee from virtue (LA I 53f). The man of Gen. 1:27 is distinguished by the three gifts of facility in apprehending (εὐθιξία), persistence in doing (ἐπιμονή) and tenacity in keeping (μνήμη). But the man of Gen. 2:7 neither remembers nor practices what is good but only is εὔθικτος, "clever," "quick," i.e. in apprehending noble actions; and accordingly, he is soon cast out of the garden (LA I 55).

In accordance with this distinction between the heavenly and earthly man, when God commands Adam in Gen. 2:16-17 to eat from every tree in paradise except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, it is clear that the earthly corruptible man is meant (LA I 90, 92). The man of Gen. 1:27 has ἀρετή "instinctively," "automatically" (αὐτομαθῶς); he is the perfect man,

ὁ τέλειος (LA I 92, 94). Because the man of Gen. 2:7 is neither bad nor good, but is "midway" between these two, he has need of exhortation (LA I 95). The meaning of Gen. 3:23 is that God inflicts punishment on the person who disobeys his commands (LA I 96).

Only the heavenly man is the tree of life, i.e. immortal and incorruptible, ἄφθαρτος . The neutral man who has not decided for virtue or wickedness has the possibility of becoming the tree of life, but as soon as he leaves neutrality he is ensnared by wickedness. In Legum Allegoria I 56-62 Philo gives a striking allegorical interpretation of Genesis 2:9 in which he elaborates this point. The text is noteworthy from the point of view of method and interpretation.[1]

Philo's exegesis of Gen. 2:9 in Legum Allegoria I 56-62 includes a repetition of frequent themes: 1) God implants virtue in the soul; it is not the work of man;[2] 2) the trees of paradise are virtues and their corresponding activities and duties; 3) the tree of life is virtue in the "most comprehensive sense," ἡ γενικωτάτη ἀρετή ,

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[1] Philo's method is similar to his exegetical method in Questions on Genesis where he remains close to his springboard texts. In QG Philo generally gives both a literal and an allegorical interpretation . In LA I 56 Philo cites his springboard text, Gen. 2:9, and begins a phrase by phrase allegorical interpretation.

[2] Cf. LA I 45f; all earthly virtue is an imitation of heavenly virtue which God has given to man. Growing as a plant in man and synonymous with "Right Logos," virtue is like the sun which illuminates the dark places of the soul (LA I 46).

which is called "goodness;" 4) the tree of life is located in the center of paradise because all of the particular virtues derive their existence from it (LA I 59); 5) the theory and practice of virtue must be distinguished. According to Philo, the phrase "beautiful to look at" has reference to theory, i.e. philosophy and its three parts, logic, ethics and physics, which is the road to virtue, while the phrase "good to eat" has reference to the exercise and practice of virtue (LA I 58).[1]

The new point which Philo makes about the position of earthly man is introduced by an exegetical subtlety. Philo points out that while Genesis 2:9 locates the tree of life in the center of paradise, after the words "and the tree of knowledge of good and evil" Moses stops without stating where the tree of knowledge is located (LA I 59ff). On this basis Philo argues that in literal fact the tree of knowledge is in paradise, but virtually it is outside (LA I 60f; cf. LA I 100). In a brief digression Philo explains that Moses did not say where the tree of knowledge was located lest the place should

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[1] The practice of virtue may be identified with ἄσκησις, "exercise," "training," "asceticism," which is one of the three methods whereby man can rise toward the divine. The preliminary requirement for this way of ascent is change of mind (μετάνοια) as symbolized in Enoch (Abr. 17-26). Sensuality (Laban) and lust (the snake) tempt the ascetic and he would fail except for the aid of God (as with Eliezer). Finally, he slays lust, and as Jacob (ὁ ἀσκητής) is transformed into Israel, he beholds God (Mut. 82; Somn. I 129). Carl Siegfried, Philo von Alexandria als Ausleger des Alten Testaments (Jena, 1875), 265-269.

become an object of awe to those not trained in natural philosophy.

The position of earthly man is comparable to the uncertain location of the tree of knowledge. The neutral man can be compared to wax which receives both beautiful and ugly impressions (LA I 61). The neutral soul has the possibility of receiving the stamp of perfect virtue and of becoming the tree of life in paradise.

LA I 61

... ἐπὶ γὰρ μίαν οὖσαν τὴν ψυχὴν αἱ ἀμύθητοι τυπώσεις ἁπάντων τῶν ἐν τῷ παντὶ ἀναφέρονται· ὅταν μὲν οὖν δέξηται τὸν τῆς τελείας ἀρετῆς χαρακτῆρα, γέγονε τὸ τῆς ζωῆς ξύλον, ὅταν δὲ τὸν τῆς κακίας, γέγονε τὸ τοῦ εἰδέναι γνωστὸν κακοῦ καὶ πονηροῦ.

Philo goes on to point out that the ruling part of man, τὸ ἡγεμονικόν, has received the stamp (χαρακτήρ) of perfect virtue and is already the tree of life in paradise; but virtually it is not in paradise because of the impress (ὁ τύπος) of wickedness (LA I 61f). Therefore, just as in the case of the tree of knowledge, earthly man is neither in paradise nor is he not in paradise. Philo interprets this to mean that when the mind contemplates unworthy things it is profane. Paradise is a relative state of mind, an introspective, mystic contemplation of virtue.

The striking point of this interpretation is that the tree of life becomes the symbol of a mystic ascent to perfect virtue. For

Philo the tree of life and perfect virtue are synonymous symbols. To obtain perfect virtue is to become the tree of life in paradise.

The way of ascent to perfect virtue is the goal of the ascetic Jacob: "he set his face for the lofty highland, the principle of perfect virtue (λόγος τελείας ἀρετῆς ; LA III 18). Enoch is an example of a man who purified himself from all injustice and reached the plenitude of perfect virtue (QG I 83). By means of his justice and conquests of lower passions Noah gained perfection of virtue and won the ultimate objective, εὐδαιμονία (Abr. 32-35). However, Enoch and Noah are only examples of the fact that those who are lovers of virtue escape from the sinful life of man and are translated by God into immortality. This is the experience of those who achieve transformation in the mystical ascent to perfect virtue.[1]

The ethical act of choosing virtue, the tree of life, and rejecting wickedness, the tree of knowledge, becomes a mystical experience of ascent to the divine.

Evaluation of Philo's Interpretation.

How unique is Philo's interpretation of Genesis 2:9? The fact that Philo cites various other interpretations shows that the tree of life was a popular item for speculation and scriptural exegesis in Alexandrian circles. In Legum Allegoria I 59 Philo includes a

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[1] E.R. Goodenough, By Light, Light, 130.

polemic against the literal interpretation which represented the tree of life as the heart. This naturalistic interpretation is based, as Philo reports, on the view that the heart is the cause of life, the dominating principle which has been alloted the central place in the body. Philo scornfully rejects it as worthy of a physician rather than a philosopher. But the fact that Philo includes such a polemical note indicates that his interpretation of the tree of life as virtue in its most generic sense is only one of a number of current interpretations.

In QG I 10 Philo refers to six different interpretations which he attributes to other groups. The first interpretation he cites is a "literal" interpretation in which it is argued that since the fruits of some trees are destructive and bring death, the fruits of others could bring life and immortality. This argument which apparently rests on the basis of Pythagorean opposites is refuted on the point that since generation is the beginning of corruption no valid distinction can be made. Philo then lists three allegorical interpretations that come from Jewish cosmologists, a group whose ideas are frequently recorded in Philo.[1]

The first of the allegorical interpretations from the cosmologists identifies the tree of life as the earth on the basis that

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[1] E.R. Goodenough, Jewish Symbols, VII, 133.

it produces all things necessary for life and is the center of all, as the tree of life is at the center of paradise. The second of these interpretations identifies the tree of life with the seven heavenly circles (of the planets). The third interpretation equates the tree of life with the sun on the basis that it is in the midst of the planets and is the cause of the seasons.

Over against these cosmological interpretations, Philo adds to his list two interpretations which explain the tree of life in terms of the human soul. In the first of these the tree of life is called the principle of leadership in the soul which, as Philo explains, directs the energies of sense perception and makes the body ready for action. Finally, Philo presents the interpretation which he prefers: "But worthy and excellent men say that the tree of life is the best of the virtues in man, namely piety, through which pre-eminently the mind becomes immortal." This is the interpretation which Philo presents in Opif. 154: paradise is the ruling power of the soul, and the tree of life is "piety" (θεοσέβεια), the means by which the soul attains immortality.

It is striking that while Philo lists variant literal and allegorical interpretations of the tree of life, including three from Jewish cosmologists, he makes no mention of an eschatological interpretation. There is no evidence to suggest that Philo is at all dependent upon an earlier Palestinian exegetical tradition for

his interpretation of Genesis 2:9.[1] If Philo knew a Jewish eschatological interpretation such as occurs in apocalyptic literature, he rejected it. In Opif. 154 Philo categorically rejects all literal interpretations of paradise and the tree of life on the grounds that the true meaning can only be found by allegorical interpretation. He then adds: "For no trees of life or of knowledge have ever at any time existed on earth, nor is it likely that they will appear in the future." By this statement Philo excludes the main content of the eschatological interpretation, i.e. the "Urzeit-Endzeit" scheme whereby the paradise tree of life was revived as a mythological symbol of the new age.

If Philo's rejection of eschatology is disregarded, certain features of his interpretation of the tree of life appear to be parallel with the Jewish eschatological interpretation. For example, in Jewish apocalyptic literature the fruit of the tree of life gives happiness, healing, and a long and immortal life to the righteous in the new age (cf. I En. 25:6). Philo, on the other hand, depicts the fruit of the paradise trees as virtues which grant insight, happiness and immortality already in the present to those who choose to follow

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[1] For a survey on the question of Philo's dependence on Palestinian traditions, see S. Sandmel, Philo's Place in Judaism: A Study of Conceptions of Abraham in Jewish Literature (Cincinnati, 1956), 1-29. For evaluation of parallels between Philo and Rabbinic sources, see M.M. Kaplan, "Philo and the Midrash," (review of E. Stein, Philo und der Midrasch), JQR, N.S. 23 (1932-33), 285-291.

virtue.

The paraphrastic expositions of Genesis 3:22, 24, in the early Palestinian targums equate the righteous with the tree of life: "all who observe it (the law) in this world shall live and endure like the tree of life in the world to come"(2TJ on Gen. 3:24). Philo points out that the earthly man becomes a tree of life when he attains the mystic goal of perfect virtue, but this, for Philo, occurs in the present and is not connected with the new age.

Philo's interpretation of the tree of life and the tree of knowledge as symbols of the two opposite directions of life, virtue and wickedness, is without a close parallel in the Jewish apocalyptic and targumic texts. In Jewish apocalyptic literature the tree of knowledge remains a symbol of death and wickedness. It is never paralleled with the tree of life as a symbol of man's present choice between virtue and wickedness, life and death. But Philo's understanding of the tree of life as the path of virtue with immortality as its goal is parallel to the targumic interpretation of the tree of life as the law, the paths of the way of life. Identification of the law with the "fruit" of the tree of life means that the righteous already partake of the tree of life. Similarly, in Philo, the attainment of perfect virtue means that earthly man already shares in the tree of life. The Qumran use of the "eternal planting" as a symbol of the community should be noted in this

connection, since it is assumed that the community alone has access to the fruit of the tree, the planting of truth, which is guarded by the strong warriors and holy spirits (1QH 8:10ff).

Parallels between the Philonic and Gnostic interpretations of the tree of life are more extensive than with Jewish eschatological interpretations. Besides use of the same Genesis texts, two other factors are of importance: 1) a similar allegorical method of exegesis; 2) a "new" non-eschatological mysticism.[1]

As in the case of Gnostic interpreters of Genesis, Philo's use of allegory enabled him to read into Genesis 2:9 his own particular interpretation.[2] It is by means of allegory, the "method dear to men with their eyes opened" (Plant. 36), that Philo can present his interpretation of the tree of life as virtue in its most generic sense, piety, the means by which immortality is attained. Philo

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[1] H. Jonas, The Gnostic Religion, 25, has pointed out that in Philo we encounter, besides the Platonic and Stoic elements with which the Jewish core is overlaid, the incipient terminology of a "new mysticism." E.R. Goodenough, By Light, Light, 7f, went further in postulating a Graeco-Jewish mystery whose objective was salvation in a mystical sense. See A.D. Nock, "Review of E.R. Goodenough, By Light, Light," Gnomon, 13 (1937), 156-165. Nock argues that Philo gives no evidence for an esoteric worship, but rather for Philo the hierophants are Moses and the prophets and the men whom God has taught, not ecclesiastical officials, and the secret is, as in the Fourth Gospel, an eternal life here and now.

[2] On Philo's place in the allegorical tradition, see S.G. Sowers, The Hermeneutics of Philo and Hebrews (Richmond, 1965), 14-27. For the use of allegory in Pythagorean and Stoic circles, see A.D. Nock, "Sarcophagi and Symbolism," AJA, 50 (1946), 150ff.

notes that the "sacred oracles" themselves provide the clues for the use of the allegorical method. Since the trees of paradise are not trees with which we are familiar, but trees of life, immortality, knowledge, apprehension and understanding, they must correspond to growths of the reasonable soul (Plant. 36f).

There are several striking points of agreement between Philo's allegorical interpretation of the paradise trees and that of Gnostic interpretations. Gnostic allegory, as in Philo, used the two paradise trees of life and knowledge as symbols of opposing principles. In Justin's Book of Baruch the two trees are allegorically understood as messengers of the opposing cosmic principles Eden and Elohim.[1] In the Apocryphon of John the two trees of life and knowledge are again symbols of opposing spirits, but the roles are reversed; cf. AJ 56:18-57:12, the tree of knowledge is now the tree which bestows life.[2]

Gnostic allegory is rebellious in tone and frequently involves a deliberate reversal of the literal meaning of the scriptural text. Philo's allegory is less radical but he uses his allegorical method freely without restraint. He rejects passages which he considered as containing something inadmissible or unworthy of scripture; e.g. Opif. 154, where he denies that the trees of life and knowledge have

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[1] See chapter IV, 134f.

[2] Ibid., 109ff.

ever existed on earth or will appear in the future.[1]

The tone and independence of Philo's allegory is particularly evident in his work Questions on Genesis where he applies a two level, literal and allegorical, interpretation. Philo's interpretation of paradise in QG 1:8 is typical of his independence: "Some believe paradise to be a garden . . . but I would say paradise should be thought a symbol of wisdom." As in the Gnostic interpretation of the paradise trees, Philo can even interpret the tree of life as a tree of knowledge: "But as for the tree of life in the midst (of the garden), it is knowledge, not only of things on earth, but also of the eldest and highest cause of all things" (QG I 6).

With Philo the tree of life becomes part of the terminology of a "new" mysticism. It is a symbol of the archetypal heavenly man and synonymous with perfect virtue, the mystic goal of earthly or physical man. In his mystical application of the tree of life Philo is in the sharpest contrast with the interpretation of Jewish apocalyptic circles and closest to that of Gnostic writers.

Parallels in Gnostic literature demonstrate the affinity of Philo's mystic conception of the tree of life with Gnostic interpretation. Both the Mandean literature and Gnostic literature from

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[1] See S.G. Sowers, The Hermeneutics of Philo and Hebrews, 22ff. On Philo's "canons" of allegory, see C. Siegfried, "Philo Judaeus," JE, X, 10f.

Nag-Hammadi may be cited as examples.

In Mandean literature the tree of life, the vine, is the Savior-deity carrying the individual soul with him to its heavenly home. The Savior-deity is the vine of life, a tree of glory whose odor gives life.[1] The Savior-deity brings the soul up to the heavenly vine outside the worlds.[2] The vine has the power of healing;[3] it provides shelter for the birds (i.e. souls), and its leaves are food and its juice drink for them.[4]

In Mandean texts the tree of life is the symbol of a mystic ascent and unity with the divine. The Philonic allegory differs from this Mandean mysticism becaused it is based on the Genesis text. Philo's language is restrained and tied to his Genesis texts whereas

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[1] "A vine I am, the vine of life, a tree whereupon there is no lie, a tree of glory from whose odor everyone is living." M. Lidzbarski, Ginza (Goettingen, 1925), 59:39-60:4.

[2] "I will bring you upward and show you the vine that is standing outside the worlds." Ginza, 573:19f.

[3] "The vine that is all life, and the great tree that is all healings." E.S. Drower, The Canonical Prayerbook of the Mandeans (Leiden, 1959), 84, 155.

[4] "Miryai I am, a grapevine, a tree that stands at the mouth of Frash. The leaves of the tree are gems, and the fruits of the tree pearls. The shoots of the vine are brightness, its vines precious light. Its fragrance is diffused among the trees, and it goes out into all worlds. The birds of the air smelt it, a visiting party sat down in the tree . . . From its shoots they eat the falling leaves and from its inner part they drink wine." M. Lidzbarski, Das Johannesbuch der Mandäer (Giessen, 1915), 129:19-130:4; cf. Ginza 327:1ff.

the Mandean texts create a new mythology from old sources.

In the Apocryphon of John the tree of life has within it the "opposing spirit" which is designed to lead man toward what is sensual and earthly; it is the tree of death.[1] The tree of knowledge, on the other hand, is the power that helps the "pneuma" hidden in man. By eating of the tree of knowledge man receives perfection, perfect knowledge, which makes him worthy to ascend to the great light (cf. AJ 60:18ff; 65:3-8).

The Philonic allegory has closer parallels with the exegesis of the Genesis paradise account in the Apocryphon of John than with the vine mythology of the Mandean texts. This is due in part to a similar allegorical exegesis of the same Genesis texts. The element Philo has in common with both the Apocryphon of John and Mandean texts is the terminology of a "new" mysticism. Philo's allegorical exegesis of Genesis 2:9 demonstrates his position of compromise with the new elements of Hellenistic religious thought.

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[1] See chapter IV, 111.

Chapter IV

Nag-Hammadi: The Gnostic Tree of Life

Introduction

In 1945 some 49 hitherto unknown Gnostic works contained in thirteen leather bound codices were discovered in a tomb near Nag-Hammadi in Upper Egypt. On the basis of language and palaeography they have been dated between the middle of the third and the end of the first half of the fourth century A.D. All of the codices are in Coptic, but most, if not all, rest on Greek originals. While the dating of the original Greek texts remains a difficult problem, it is clear that they bring us into the world of the second century.[1]

The variety of material contained in the collection is of considerable interest. It contains discussions of cosmogony, treatises of a dogmatic nature, dialogues, "gospels," "epistles," and apocalypses. In this diverse collection there are frequent allusions and echoes of both Old and New Testament texts. Gnostic interpreters of the Old Testament were preoccupied with the first chapters of Genesis, especially Gen. 1-3.[2] The account of creation and the paradise story of Gen. 2-3 were items of special attraction for the Gnostic.

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[1] See W.C. van Unnik, Newly Discovered Gnostic Writings (Naperville, 1960), 91.

[2] See Jean Doresse, The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics (New York, 1960), 168f, 261, 309.

The Apocryphon of John is one of three key writings which presents an interpretation of Genesis 2:9. Three copies of the Apocryphon of John were found at Nag-Hammadi, each a different recension, but the primary text remains the copy from Codex Berolinensis.[1] Of the two major recensions of the Apocryphon of John, the text from Codex Berolinensis is the most complete representative of the shorter version.

The second writing which presents an interpretation of Genesis 2:9 is the tractate published as the "Titleless text from Codex II of Nag-Hammadi." It has been aptly entitled "On the Origin of the World" by H.M. Schenke.[2] Like the Apocryphon of John, the tractate is a representative of a so-called Barbelo-Gnosis.[3]

A third key writing which contains several references to the Genesis paradise account is the Gnostic Gospel of Philip. The so-called Gospel of Truth and the Gospel of Thomas are other writings which contain brief but significant allusions to the Gnostic interpretation of the paradise trees.

Gnostic interpretations of the tree of life will be considered

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[1] Codex Berolinensis (on papyrus) was secured by C. Reinhardt in Akhmim, Egypt, in 1895, but the full edition was not published until 1955.

[2] See Hans-Martin Schenke, "Vom Ursprung der Welt," TL, 84 (1959), 243ff.

[3] Ibid., 246.

under the following categories: 1) the Gnostic interpretation of Genesis 2:9; 2) Gnostic traditions concerning the cross.

The Gnostic Interpretation of Genesis 2:9: the Texts.

The Apocryphon of John 55:18-58:7; 60:16-61:6.[1]

55:18) He brought him 19) and placed him in paradise, 56:1) of which he said that it would be 2) a delight for him; that means that 3) he tricked him. For their delight 4) is bitter and their 5) beauty lawless. Their delight 6) is deceit and their 7) tree was hostility. Their 8) fruit is poison, against which there is no 9) healing and their promise is 10) death for him. Their tree 11) was planted as the tree of life. 12) But I will proclaim to you the 13) mystery of their life; 14) that is their opposing spirit, 15) which comes from them 16) so that it will lead him astray, so that he 17) will not know his perfection. That tree 18) is made as follows: 19) its root is bitter; its branches are 20) shadows of death; its 57:1) leaves are hate

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1 Coptic text: W.C. Till, Die Gnostischen Schriften des koptischen Papyrus Berlinensis 8502, TU 60 (Berlin, 1955); M. Krause and P. Labib, Die drei Versionen des Apocryphon des Johannes (Wiesbaden, 1962). The BG text is used as the base text; the English translation is dependent on that of W.C. Till, "The Secret Book of John," Gnosticism, ed. by R.M. Grant, (London, 1961), 69ff.

and 2) deceit; its sap is an ointment 3) of wickedness and 4) its fruit is the desire of 5) death; its seed 6) drinks up those who taste 7) it; the Hades is their abode.

8) But the tree which they 9)call "of the 10) knowledge of good 11) and evil," this is 12) the thought of light 13) on whose account the commandment was given 14) not to taste of it, that is, 15) "do not hear them," since the 16) commandment was directed against him, so that 17) he might not look up towards his 18) perfection nor know his 19) nakedness in relation to his perfection. 20) But I have brought you 58:1) to eat of it. I said to him, Christ, was it not the serpent 3) who taught her? He 4) smiled and said, The serpent 5) taught her the begetting 6) of desire for pollution 7) and corruption, since these serve him . . .

60:16) From the Absolute Sovereignty of the height 18) and of revelation, Thought 19) taught them knowledge 61:1) through the tree, in the 2) form of an eagle. She 3) taught them to eat 4) knowledge so that he 5) might take care of his perfection, since 6) both had the flaw of ignorance.

The Gospel of Philip 119:22-27

22) Two trees are in paradise, 23) the one produces beasts, the other produces 24) man. Adam ate from the tree

25) which produced beasts, and becoming a beast 26) he begat beasts. Because of this 27) they worship . . .[1]

The Gospel of Philip 121:33-122:12

33) This paradise is the place where 34) they will say to me [0 man, eat] 35) of this or do not eat [of this according to your] 1) wish. This is the place where I will eat all things, 2) since there is the tree of knowledge. That one slew Adam, but here 4) the tree of knowledge made man alive. 5) The law was the tree. It has power 6) to give the knowledge of good 7) and evil. It neither made him cease from 8) evil nor did it set him in the good, 9) but it created death for those who 10) ate of it. For when he said 11) "Eat this, do not eat that," it became 12) the beginning of death.

The Gospel of Thomas 84:22-25

22) For you have five trees in paradise, 23) which are unmoved in summer (or) in winter 24) and their leaves do not fall. 25) Whoever knows them will not taste death.[2]

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[1] Coptic text: W.C. Till, Das Evangelium nach Philippos (Berlin, 1963). English translation: R. McL. Wilson, The Gospel of Philip (London, 1962); cf. C. J. de Catanzaro, JThS, 13 (1962), 35ff.

[2] A. Guillaumont, H.Ch. Puech, G. Quispel, W. Till, and Y.'Abd Al Masih, The Gospel according to Thomas (New York, 1959).

On the Origin of the World 158:2-29

2) Then righteousness created paradise, 3) and it is beautiful, located beyond the circle of the moon 4) and the circle of the sun in the land of delight 5) in the East in the midst 6) of the stones. And desire is in the midst of 7) the beautiful tall trees. And 8) the tree of immortal life, as it 9) was revealed by the will of God, 10) is in the north of paradise to make 11) the souls of the saints immortal, those 12) who come out of the plasma of poverty 13) at the end of the age. The color 14) of the tree of life is like the sun, and 15) its branches are beautiful. Its leaves are like 16) the cypress. Its fruit is like clusters of grapes which are white. Its height 18) reaches up to heaven and beside it (stands) the tree 19) of knowledge which has the power 20) of God. Its brightness is like the moon when 21) it shines brightly. And its branches are beautiful. 22) Its leaves are like fig leaves. 23) Its fruit is like the good large dates. 24) This (tree) is in the north of paradise 25) to awaken the souls out of 26) the sleep of the demons, in order that they might come 27) to the tree of life and eat of 28) its fruit and condemn 29) the powers with their angels.

On the Origin of the World 168:26-169:13

26) They assembled a council and said: See, Adam 27) has become like one of us, so that he 28) knows to distinguish between light and darkness. 29) Now, lest he is deceived by 30) the tree of knowledge and also comes 31) to the tree of life and eats of it and by means of it 32) becomes immortal, becomes Lord, and 33) condemns us and despises all our majesty --- 34) then he shall condemn 35) us and the world --- Come, let us throw him 1) out of paradise down to the earth 2) to the place where he was brought forth, in order that he 3) can not from now on know any more 4) than us. And so they threw Adam out of 5) paradise with his wife, but it 6) did not satisfy them, what they had done, and they were afraid 7) that he would come to the tree of life. They surrounded it 8) with great fear by means of fiery living creatures 9) which they call cherubim and they placed 10) a fiery sword in their midst which turns 11) in every hour with great fear, in order that 12) no one of the earthly could ever come to 13) this place hereafter.[1]

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[1] A. Böhlig and P. Labib, Die Koptisch-Gnostische Schrift ohne Titel aus Codex II von Nag-Hammadi (Berlin, 1962). The text has been listed by J. Doresse, Secret Books, 165ff, as "untitled text number 40," and entitled by H.-M. Schenke, TL, 84 (1959), 243 ff, as "On the Origin of the World." The latter title will be used hereafter.

The Gnostic Interpretation of Genesis 2:9.

An entirely new interpretation of Genesis 2:9 occurs in the Gnostic literature from Nag-Hammadi. The new aspect involves a positive interpretation of the tree of knowledge as a symbol of salvation. This innovation required a reinterpretation of the Genesis text and existing traditions and caused numerous exegetical problems for the Gnostic interpreters of Genesis 2-3.

The author of the Apocryphon of John begins a radical reinterpretation of the Genesis paradise account with a play on the word τρυφή (used three times in BG 56:2-5). The archon tells Adam that paradise will be a "delight," but this is said to deceive him since in actual fact the delight is bitter and the beauty of paradise lawless (BG 56:1ff).[1] While in LXX Gen. 3:23, 24, "garden of Eden " is rendered "garden of delight,"[2] in the Apocryphon of John "garden of delight" is given the interpretation "garden of deceit" (τρυφή = ἀπάτη ; cf. BG 56:3, 5f). Instead of being good for food (Gen. 2:8), the fruit of the paradise trees produce a poison against which there is no "healing."

The new interpretation of Genesis 2:9 in the Apocryphon of John is put into the mouth of the revealer.

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[1] In Codex II 69:19f the archons command Adam to "Eat" (imperative ⲟⲩⲱⲙ) in "freedom," "ease" (ⲥⲣⲏⲉ = τρυφή). For discussion, see Søren Giverson, Apocryphon Johannis (Copenhagen, 1963), 259.

[2] Cf. Gen. 2:15, M plus cursives; Ezek. 28:13, 31:9, 16.

CII 69:24-29 (cf. BG 56:10-13).
And (δέ) they placed the tree of their life in the midst of paradise, but (δέ) I will teach you what the secret (μυστήριον) is of their life ...

The reference to the tree of life "in the midst of paradise" (ϩN ΤΜΗΤϵ ΜΠαρΔΙcoc ; not in BG 56:12f) followed by the reference to the tree "of the knowledge of good and evil" (CII 70:4f; BG 57:9f) shows that the "secret teaching" is an allegorical interpretation of Genesis 2:9. The word μυστήριον has a twofold meaning in this context: 1) it signifies the mystic or allegorical meaning of Gen. 2:9 which is contrary to the literal sense;[1] 2) it signifies the secret knowledge, the perfect gnosis, given by the revealer.[2]

The new interpretation of Genesis 2:9 in the Apocryphon of John involves a reversal of the traditional functions of the two paradise trees.

The tree of life (BG 56:18-57:4; cf. CII 69:30-34)
Its root (NoγNϵ) is bitter (cΔωϵ);
Its branches are shadows of death (ϩΔIBϵc MMoγ);

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[1] For a Gnostic parallel on Jesus as the "interpreter" who gives the correct allegorical interpretation of paradise and its trees, see H.Ch. Puech, "Fragments of a Dialogue between John and Jesus," New Testament Apocrypha, Hennecke-Schneemelcher (Philadelphia, 1963), I, 331-333.

[2] In BG 61:13 Ialdabaoth is ignorant of the μυστήριον which originated from the decree of the holy height, i.e. from God's edict in Gen. 3:16 that man should rule over woman. The μυστήριον is also the gnosis passed on to John by Jesus which must be spread "in secret" (BG 75:15ff; 76:16). Cf. the Naassene sermon, Hippolytus, Ref. V, 10, where Jesus opens "all mysteries" and delivers under the name of "gnosis" the secrets of the holy way; see G. Bornkamm, μυστήριον , TWNT, IV, 818f.

Its leaves (σωβε) are hate and deceit (ἀπάτη);
Its sap is an ointment of wickedness (τωρε πονηρία);
Its fruit is the desire of death (ἐπιθυμία ммоу).

The tree of knowledge (BG 57:8, 17; cf. CII 70:3, 6)
It is the thought of light (ἐπίνοια мπоуоιN);
By eating of its fruit Adam recognizes the nakedness of his ugliness; and he receives the helper called ζωή , and achieves perfection.

Ialdabaoth placed within the tree of life the power called ἀντίμιμον πνεῦμα. According to BG 56:14ff the purpose of this "opposing spirit" is to lead Adam astray so that he will not know his perfection.[1] When Adam eats of the tree of life the "opposing spirit" will lead him to what is earthly, i.e. death. The tree of knowledge, however, is the ἐπίνοια , the "thought," "vision," of light. The command not to eat of the tree of knowledge is interpreted as another attempt to deceive Adam and prevent him from receiving the "thought of light." The command (Gen. 2:16f, 3:3) was given to hinder Adam from looking up to his true destiny and from escaping the power of Ialdabaoth.

This interpretation of the two paradise trees causes exegetical problems for the Gnostic exegete when he attempts to explain Genesis 3:2ff, Eve and the serpent. His solution is to insert a new element into the account: Christ teaches Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge,

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[1] The parallel text in CII 69:28ff states nothing about the purpose of the "opposing spirit," though a similar explanation is given in CII 77:25f (in order that the ψυχή might be defiled).

not the serpent.

> BG 57:20-58:7
> But I have brought you (pl.) to eat of it. I said to him, "Christ, was it not the serpent who taught her (Eve)?" He smiled and said, "the serpent taught her the begetting of desire for pollution and corruption since these serve him."

The serpent is left in its traditional role of corrupter. The serpent taught Eve the begetting of desire for pollution (ⲥⲱⲟⲩ) and corruption (ⲦⲀⲔⲟ); cf. CII 69:35, where the tree of life is similarly depicted. But the serpent was not successful at this time: "he (the serpent) knew that she (Eve) would not obey him, since she is shrewder than he" (BG 58:8f). The role of the serpent is thus to lure Eve to eat of the tree of life whose fruit is mortal lust, i.e. desire (ἐπιθυμία). The serpent fails, but lust and procreation are introduced by the first archon (BG 63:2-6; cf. BG 74-75).

By eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge Adam received knowledge of perfection instead of death. From the fruit of the tree Adam received the "thought of light," the helper (βοηθός) which is called ζωή (BG 53; cf. CII 68:17ff). As a result Adam discovers that he is "naked" of perfection (BG 57:19). Eve is created and "thought of light" teaches both Adam and Eve knowledge (ⲥⲟⲩⲛ) through the tree in the form of an eagle. The knowledge transmitted concerns "perfection" since both Adam and Eve had the flaw of ignorance (BG 60:16-61:7). The reason Ialdabaoth cast them out of paradise is because they obtained perfection and life, not because they

have disobeyed the divine command.

In the Apocryphon of John the tree of knowledge functions as the agency through which the saving knowledge is mediated to the Gnostic from the revealer. In BG 57:8 "thought of light" is the tree of knowledge; but cf. BG 60:18ff where "thought" is the revealer who teaches Adam and Eve knowledge through the tree.[1] The latter passage explains how the revelation comes through the tree of knowledge. The thought of light teaches Adam and Eve through the tree in the form of an eagle. In the Codex II version further elaboration takes place. The revealer who teaches Adam and Eve concerning nakedness in the form of an eagle on the tree of knowledge is Christ. Codex II 71:26ff: "I, I revealed myself in the likeness of an eagle on the tree of knowledge, that is the Epinoia from the Pronoia of the pure light . . ." Those "sleeping" are awakened by the teaching of the revealer Christ.[2]

The exegetical problem caused by the reinterpretation of the tree of knowledge as a symbol of revelation and life is solved in

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[1] Cf. BG 71:6-10 where "thought of light" is equated with "the merciful mother and the merciful Holy Spirit."

[2] In the Manichaean cosmogony according to Theodore bar Konai, Jesus awakens Adam from the "sleep of death" and makes him eat of the tree of life. Jonas, The Gnostic Religion, 87, 94, argues that by Mani's time the Gnostic interpretation had become so well known that he could put Jesus in the place of the serpent without mention of the latter. But the tradition that Jesus would reward the tree of life to Adam and the saints was not exclusively Gnostic (cf. Rev. 2:7, 22:14; Vita Adae et Evae 40-42).

the Gospel of Philip by positing two trees of knowledge. The text of saying 84 is damaged, but lines 22-26 can be restored.

> EPh 119:22-26 (saying 84)
> Two trees are in paradise. One produces beasts, the other produces man. Adam ate from the tree which produced beasts and becoming a beast he begot beasts.

The tree from which Adam ate is the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The explanation that this tree produced beasts may be a reference to the tree of knowledge as a means to sexual knowledge (Cf. Clement of Alex., Strom. III 17,102). A parallel in saying 94 shows that the second tree of knowledge is the tree whose fruit gives life.

> EPh 122:1-4 (saying 94)
> This is the place where I will eat all things, since there is the tree of knowledge (γνῶσις). That one slew Adam, but here the tree of knowledge made man alive.

In saying 94 the Gnostic exegete distinguishes between the tree of knowledge in Eden from which Adam ate and the tree of knowledge in the paradise of the new age. The restoration of paradise in the new age is not a simple identity with the primeval time. In the new paradise there will be no prohibition against eating of the paradise fruit as in Genesis 2:17, 3:3, but the command will be to eat or not to eat "as you wish" (121:33ff). The command not to eat, i.e. the law (122:5), had the power to give the knowledge of good and evil, but it created death for those who ate of the tree. The

two trees of knowledge are not to be identified since the first brought death but the second will give life.

A variant exegetical interpretation of the two paradise trees occurs in the tractate "On the Origin of the World." The tractate harmonizes the Gnostic interpretation of the tree of knowledge with the traditional Jewish eschatological interpretation of the tree of life. Both the tree of life and the tree of knowledge are interpreted soteriologically.

According to OW 158:2ff paradise was created by δικαιοσύνη [1] and is located in the East beyond the circle of the sun and the moon. Paradise in the Gnostic systems is located above the earth; cf. OW 168:35f where the archons agree to throw Adam out of paradise "down to the earth" (ⲉⲡⲓⲧⲛ ⲉⲃⲏ ⲡⲕⲁϩ). The flaming sword of Gen. 3:24 is conceived of as part of the heavenly spheres which revolve every hour around paradise and prevent the Gnostic from ascending to the tree of life (OW 169:10ff).[2]

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[1] But cf. OW 154:12ff where Sabaoth is linked with δικαιοσύνη. If this identification is correct, paradise is the creation of Sabaoth. See Böhlig and Labib, Die Koptisch-Gnostische Schrift ohne Titel, 64, notes.

[2] For a similar allegorical interpretation of the cherubim and the flaming sword, cf. Philo, De Cherubim, 21ff. Philo gives two physical explanations of the cherubim and the flaming sword: 1) they are an allegorical figure of the revolution of the planetary sphere with its seven zones in which the planets move; the revolution of the whole heaven being the sword (21-24); 2) the daily revolution of the two hemispheres, one above the earth, the other below it, with the sun as the sword (25-26). Philo's preference is for a third interpretation which finds in the cherubim the two chief "Potencies" of God, while the sword is the Logos which unites the two (27-30).

The description of the two paradise trees is a harmonization of Gnostic and Jewish traditions. Mythological elements in the description are derived from the elaborate descriptions of Jewish apocalyptic literature. According to OW 158:13ff the tree of life (ⲡⲩⲏⲛ ⲙⲡⲱⲛϩ) and the tree of knowledge (ⲡⲩⲏⲛ ⲛⲧⲅⲛⲟⲥⲓⲥ) are located in the north of paradise and both are depicted as trees of beauty (cf. I Enoch 24, 32). The description of the tree of life is a harmonization of traditions: 1) the cosmological tree whose height reaches up to heaven (cf. Ezek. 31:3); 2) the cypress; one of the most common sacred trees in the ancient Near East known in both art and literature (cf. 1QH 8:5; Sirach 24:13;[1] 3) the vine whose fruit is like "clusters of grapes which are white" (ⲛⲛⲥⲙⲁϩ ⲛⲉⲗⲟⲟⲗⲉ ⲉⲩⲟⲩⲟϭⲩ). The specific identification of white grapes with the tree of life is related to the Gnostic tradition of anointing with white oil from the tree of life (cf. Origen, Cels. VI, 27). Only the perfect can enter paradise and receive the ointment of the tree of life (cf. EV 36:12ff). The tree of life retains the cosmological significance found in earlier mythological traditions. It is the tree of light whose color is like the sun.[2]

According to the author of the tractate the functions of the two paradise trees are related. The tree of knowledge awakens the

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[1] E. Douglas Van Buren, Symbols of the Gods in Mesopotamian Art, 22ff.

[2] See A.J. Wensinck, "Tree and Bird as Cosmological Symbols in Western Asia," 8ff.

souls out of the sleep of demons (ⲧⲃⲱⲕⲉ ⲛⲛⲇⲁⲓⲙⲱⲛ) in order that they may come to the tree of life and eat of its fruit (158:25ff). In OW 168:29 the archons, as the adversaries of Adam, attribute to the tree of knowledge the power to "deceive" (ⲣ ⲭⲁⲗ) Adam. For the archons the tree of knowledge is the tree of deception since its power would enable Adam to reach the tree of life and as a result they would be condemned. For Adam and for the Gnostic the tree of knowledge is in fact the "power of God" (δύναμις ⲙⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ; OW 158:19f).

The interpretation of the tree of life in OW 158:8ff is dependent upon Jewish apocalyptic traditions. The tree of life is not only the tree of "immortal life" (158:8), but the tree which makes the souls of the saints immortal (ἀθάνατος) at the end of the age (158:10ff); cf. I En. 25:5, Apoc. Moses 28, where the tree of life is similarly depicted. The author of the tractate has modified Jewish traditions from the point of view of typical Gnostic tenets; e.g. the souls of the saints who receive this immortality from the tree of life are those who come out of the πλάσμα of poverty (ⲙⲛⲧⲭⲏⲕⲉ), i.e. the body (158:11f; cf. AJ 55:3-13). To be awakened out of the sleep of demons by the agency of γνῶσις, the tree of knowledge, enables the souls of the saints to attain immortality, the tree of life. In the Jewish apocalyptic tradition this immortality is reserved for the new age, but for the Gnostic

the end of the age has come and a new age begun already when the fruit of the tree of knowledge is eaten (158:25ff).

For the author of the tractate the tree of life is a symbol of immortality and power. In OW 168:26-169:13 where the author paraphrases Gen. 3:22-24 along Gnostic lines, the archons fear that if Adam eats of the tree of life he will despise their majesty and condemn them. Eating of the fruit of the tree of life confers power, "lordship" (cf. 158:27ff with 168:31ff). According to OW 168:27f Adam knows to distinguish between "light and darkness" (cf. Gen. 3:22 where Adam knows to distinguish between "good and evil"), but the archons fear that he will know more than they do if he eats of the tree of life. This is the reason Adam is expelled from paradise, not because he has disobeyed the command of God. The archons placed the cherubim and the fiery sword as guards surrounding the way to the tree of life (Gen. 3:24) to prevent Adam, i.e. earthly man from reaching the tree of life in the future. But by first coming to the tree of knowledge and eating of its fruit earthly man can attain immortality, the tree of life.

The author of the tractate has consciously reinterpreted the Genesis paradise account and Jewish apocalyptic traditions in line with Gnostic tenets. The Genesis text is now read from the point of view of a Gnostic understanding of salvation and the world.

A secondary reflection of the Gnostic interpretation of the

paradise trees occurs in Logion 19 of the Gospel of Thomas. The five paradise trees are collectively the saving knowledge which bestows immortality.

> ETh 84:17-25 (logion 19)
> Jesus said: Blessed is he who was before he came into being. If you become disciples to me and hear my words, these stones will minister to you. For you have five trees in paradise which are unmoved in summer (or) winter and their leaves do not fall. Whoever knows (ⲥⲟⲩⲱⲛ) them will not taste death.

Logion 19 is linked to the "Endzeit-Urzeit" pattern of logion 18. Jesus is made to say: "For where the beginning (ⲁⲣⲭⲏ) is, there shall be the end (ⲧⲉⲗⲉⲩ). Blessed is he who shall stand at the beginning, and he shall know the end and he shall not taste death" (84:13ff). Both logia have a similar beatitude form and end with the same words "will not taste death"(cf. log. 85). Correct interpretation of the five never-failing paradise trees, like correct interpretation of the words of Jesus (cf. log. 1), makes it possible for man to avoid "tasting death."

The reference to "five" paradise trees belongs to the general symbolism of allegory rather than the Gnostic sacramental system.[1] The scheme of five vices and five virtues listed in Colossians 3:5,

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[1] Eric Segelberg has suggested that the Gnostic system of five sacraments is referred to in Logion 19. But it has not been conclusively shown that there were five Gnostic sacraments. See E. Segelberg, "The Coptic-Gnostic Gospel according to Philip and its Sacramental System," Numen, 7 (1960), 191.

12, and Philo's list of five paradise trees illustrates this symbolic use of the number five. In Plant. 36f Philo lists five paradise trees followed by the parenthetical explanation "of the conception of good and evil." The five trees are: ζωή, ἀθανασία, εἴδησις, κατάληψις and σύνεσις. The first two are trees of life, the "landmarks" of life, while the last three are trees of knowledge, the "landmarks" of evil. Listed together they are the "conception of good and evil."

Parallels to the five paradise trees of the Gospel of Thomas also occur in Coptic fragments of a dialogue between John and Jesus, and in Pistis Sophia, the Gnostic treatise dated in the late third century. In the Coptic fragments Jesus tells John: "I have explained to you, O John, concerning Adam and paradise and the five trees in an intelligible allegory" (σύμβολον νοερόν). When I, John, heard these things, I said: "I have made a good beginning, I have completed knowledge (γνῶσις) and a hidden mystery (μυστήριον) and allegories (σύμβολον) of truth. . ."[1] In Pistis Sophia the allegory of the five trees is related to the complex cosmological system of the book.[2] The five "unshakable" trees

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[1] Hennecke-Schneemelcher, New Testament Apocrypha, I, 332f.

[2] Carl Schmidt, Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften (Berlin, 1954²), I, 123ff, 306f, 316. For an analysis of the system of Pistis Sophia, see F. Legge, Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity (Cambridge, 1915), II, 134-202.

belong to the treasure house where light from matter is stored up. Emanations from the five trees include Jeu, the overseer of light, who emanated from the pure light of the first tree, and Melchisedek, who emanated from the first and fifth tree. Another emanation from the five trees is the guard of the veil of the treasure house. Jesus is the ineffable mystery who will be king over the emanations of light, the five trees and the other orders at the dissolution of the cosmos when the number of the perfect souls shall be caught up.

The Gnostic interpretation of paradise and its trees became so firmly established that cryptic allusions to the saving power of the paradise trees could be made without mention of the Genesis text or the original allegory. In the Pistis Sophia the tree of knowledge and the tree of life are both accorded a similar level of importance as the agency of revelation. Jesus is made to say: "As for the rest of the lower mysteries . . . you shall find them in the two books of Jeu which Enoch wrote when I spoke with him from the tree of knowledge and from the tree of life which were in the paradise of Adam."[1] The Gnostic interpretation of the paradise account and Jesus' connection with it had become so well known that the author of Pistis Sophia uses the tradition to support his claim of authority for the books of Jeu.

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[1] Carl Schmidt, Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften, I, 158, 228f.

Gnostic Traditions concerning the Cross: the Texts.

The Gospel of Philip 121:8-19

8) Philip the apostle 9) said "Joseph the carpenter planted 10) a garden (paradise) because he needed the 11) wood for his trade. It was 12) he who made the cross from the 13) trees which he planted. And his seed 14) hung on that which he planted. His seed was 15) Jesus but the planting was the cross. But the tree 16) of life is in the midst of the garden (paradise) 17) and the olive tree from which the chrism is 18) made by him for the resurrection."[1]

The Gospel of Truth 18:11-29.

11) That is the 12) gospel of him whom they seek, 13) which he has revealed to the 14) perfect through the mercies 15) of the father (as) the hidden mystery 16) Jesus the Christ. Through him 17) he enlightened those who were in darkness 18) because of forgetfulness. He enlightened 19) them. He gave them a path. 20) That path is the truth which 21) he taught them. For this reason 22) error was angry with him. She 23) persecuted him. She was endangered by him, 24) so she made him powerless. He was nailed to a tree. He 25) became a fruit of the knowledge of 26) the

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[1] See note 1, 106.

father. He did not destroy (them) because 27) they ate of it. But 28) he caused them to become joyful 29) because of this discovery.[1]

Gnostic Traditions concerning the Cross.

Secondary reflections of the Gnostic interpretation of Genesis 2:9 occur in traditions concerning the cross. While orthodox Christian circles interpreted the cross in terms of the tree of life, Gnostic circles subsumed the cross under the symbols of planting and tree of knowledge. The two texts which illustrate the Gnostic interpretation of the cross are the Gospel of Philip 121:8ff and the Gospel of Truth 18:11ff.

The first of these texts, saying 91f of the Gospel of Philip, preserves apocryphal Christian traditions concerning Joseph and the cross. References to Joseph the "carpenter" early dropped out of the Gospel traditions (Matt. 13:55; cf. Mk. 6:3), but were given new prominence in Christian apocryphal literature like the second century "Protevangelium of James" and the fourth century "History of Joseph the Carpenter." While there is no exact parallel to saying 91, comparison with existing texts shows that the account of Joseph and the cross belongs to a late stage in this apocryphal tradition.[2]

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[1] Coptic text: M. Malinine, H.-C. Puech, G. Quispel, Evangelium Veritatis (Zuerich, 1956). For English translation, cf. W.W. Isenberg, "The Gospel of Truth," Gnosticism, ed. by R.M. Grant, 146ff.

[2] See M.R. James, The Apocryphal New Testament (Oxford,

According to EPh 121:13f Jesus, the "seed of Joseph" (cf. Jn. 1:45, 6:42), hung on the trees which Joseph planted in his "garden." There is a play here on the word "paradise." Joseph planted the trees in his garden (paradise), but the tree of life is in the midst of the garden, i.e. paradise (cf. EPh 121:10 with 121:16).

The key passage is the following:

> EPh 121:14-18 (saying 91f)
> His seed was Jesus, but (δέ) the planting was the cross; but (ἀλλά) the tree of life is in the midst of paradise and the olive tree from which the chrism is made for the resurrection.

The cross is identified as the planting (ⲧⲱⲥⲉ) and is contrasted with the tree of life in the midst of paradise (Gen. 2:9).[1] The Greek adversative particle ἀλλά , "but," "nevertheless," indicates the emphatic nature of the contrast.

In EPh 121:16-18 the tree of life in paradise is linked with the olive tree (ⲭⲟⲉⲓⲧ) "from which the chrism is made by him for the resurrection" (cf. II Enoch 8:3, B text). According to saying 95 chrism is more important than baptism: "We are called Christians because we are anointed, not because we are baptized." In the sacramental system of the Ophites chrism was the anointing of oil from the tree of life. Origen quotes the following Ophite formula:

1955), 39ff; cf. "Sethite Revelation," Labib, 157ff, cited by de Catanzaro, JThS, 13 (1962), 71.

[1] The Coptic ⲧⲱⲥⲉ = φυτεία ; see Coptic Matt. 15:13; cf. Ignatius, Trall. 11:1.

"I have been anointed with the white oil from the tree of life" (Cels. 6, 27).[1] In the Clementine Recognitions the tradition of anointing from the oil of the tree of life is connected with the anointing of Jesus as the Christ (I, 45). The pious are to be anointed with similar oil by Christ when they enter his kingdom. The chrism made from a branch of the tree of life was conceived of as an eternal ointment that bestowed immortality (I, 46f).

The emphatic rejection of the tree of life as the cross is part of the polemic against the beliefs of the orthodox church which begins with the discussion of resurrection and baptism (EPh 121:1ff). According to EPh 121:1ff (saying 90) those who say they will die first and rise again are in error, since they must receive the resurrection first while they live. The Gnostic polemic is directed against the orthodox interpretation of resurrection, baptism and the cross. It is not baptism (cf. sayings 90, 95) but chrism that ensures eternal life for the believer in the present life (cf. 121:22f). The person who is anointed with chrism possesses the resurrection, the light, the cross and the Holy Spirit, i.e. the "All" (122:19f). Chrism is the all encompassing sacrament which bestows immortality and is therefore to be identified with the tree of life.

In the so-called Gospel of Truth the cross is alluded to twice, once in 20:25ff where there is possible dependence upon the New

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[1] GCS Origen II, 97.

Testament,[1] and once in 18:21ff where the cross is interpreted as the paradise tree of knowledge. In the latter text Jesus is described as bringing the "Gospel" and therefore a way of truth to those who by reason of forgetting were in darkness.[2] But πλάνη, who is the mythical figure of error, was angered and persecuted the Gospel.

> EV 18:21-29
> For this reason πλάνη was angry with him; she persecuted him. . . He was nailed to a tree (ϣⲉ). He became a fruit (ⲟⲩⲧⲁϩ) of the knowledge (ⲥⲁⲩⲛⲉ) of the father. He did not destroy them because they ate it. But he caused them to become joyful because of this discovery.

According to EV 18:12ff the Gospel is the secret mystery, Jesus the Christ. The use of the pronoun "he" in 18:21ff is ambiguous. It can refer to either Jesus or the Gospel. The Gospel is nailed to the "tree" in the person of Jesus.

The passage is cast with allusions to the Genesis tree of knowledge: cf. LXX Gen. 3:3, εἶπεν ὁ θεός, Οὐ φάγεσθαι ἀπ' αὐτοῦ οὐδὲ

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[1] In EV 20:25ff a testamentary disposition is fastened to the cross: "He was nailed to a tree, he fastened the testamentary disposition from the father to the cross." Cf. Colossians 2:14: ἐξαλείψας τὸ καθ' ἡμῶν χειρόγραφον τοῖς δόγμασιν ... προσηλώσας αὐτὸ τῷ σταυρῷ. The handwriting which consists of δόγματα has a close parallel in the διάταγμα (20:26) of the Gospel of Truth. But in Colossians the writing is "against us," while in the Gospel of Truth it is for us and is validated by being fastened to the cross.

[2] In the Gospel of Truth εὐαγγέλιον is always used in the sense of "glad tidings" and not in the sense of a literary document. See H. Jonas, "Evangelium Veritatis and Valentinianism," SPatr VI (1962), 98ff.

μὴ ἅψησθε αὐτοῦ, ἵνα μὴ ἀποθάνητε. The Jesus-Gospel is nailed to the paradise tree of knowledge and Jesus becomes the fruit of the "knowledge" of the Father. The tree of knowledge does not destroy those who eat of it but rather grants joy --- causes them to be joyful --- because of this discovery.

Interpretation of the cross as the tree of knowledge follows along the lines of the Gnostic interpretation of Genesis 2:9. The original tree of knowledge in paradise brought death, but now it bestows life. The functions of the tree of life are ascribed to the tree of knowledge in a reversal of the Genesis account.

Evaluation of the Gnostic Interpretation.

There are several variant interpretations of the tree of life in the literature from Nag-Hammadi, not simply one interpretation. The striking negative interpretation in the Apocryphon of John is unique in Gnostic texts and is without parallels in either Jewish or Christian literature. A positive interpretation occurs in the other Gnostic texts. In the tractate "On the Origin of the World" the saints can reach immortality, the tree of life, by eating first from the tree of knowledge (158:25ff). The tree of knowledge awakens the souls of the saints "out of the sleep of demons" and enables them to reach the tree of life. In the Gospel of Philip the tree of life is connected with the sacramental anointing with oil (EPh 121:14ff)

and in the Gospel of Thomas the paradise trees collectively bestow immortality on whoever "knows" them.

As in Genesis, the tree of knowledge is the focal point of the narrative, not the tree of life, but it now has a new function and meaning. It is no longer a symbol of death and despair but is consistently interpreted in positive terms. This radical reinterpretation of the tree of knowledge is characteristic of the Gnostic use of Genesis 2-3.

In the tractate "On the Origin of the World" the Genesis account is loosely paraphrased and reinterpreted in terms of Gnostic conceptions of salvation and the world. The Genesis text is made to support Gnostic teachings. In the Apocryphon of John there is a constant play on key words and phrases from Genesis 2-3 and a deliberate reversal of the literal meaning of the text. The explanation for Adam's expulsion from paradise illustrates the nature of the exegesis. Adam and Eve are expelled from paradise not because they have disobeyed God, but because they received the perfect "gnosis" by eating of the tree of knowledge.

The Gospel of Philip exhibits a similar treatment of the text of Genesis 2-3. It is not the eating of the tree of knowledge which is the beginning of death, but rather the command not to eat (Gen. 2:17, 3:3). The command is the beginning of death since it neither caused Adam to cease from evil nor did it put him in the "good"

(122:5ff). Thus, in the new paradise there will be no such command, only the declaration "Eat, O man, or do not eat, as you wish" (121: 33ff). In both the Apocryphon of John and the tractate "On the Origin of the World" the command not to eat is dismissed as an attempt to deceive Adam.

It is clear that the Gnostic interpreters of Genesis 2-3 drew on existing Jewish exegetical traditions for their interpretation of the paradise account. This is shown, for example, in OW 158:10-13 where the tree of life is depicted as the tree of immortality reserved for the saints at the end of the age. In Gnostic texts, as in Jewish works like II Enoch and the Apocalypse of Moses, the tree of life is associated with the oil for anointing (cf. EPh 121:15ff). As we have already noted, the tree of knowledge was also given a positive interpretation as a tree of supernatural knowledge and secret wisdom in Jewish literature.[1]

There are several related interpretations of the tree of knowledge in the Gnostic texts. The two primary interpretations are: 1) the conception of the tree of knowledge as a means of revelation through which the perfect "gnosis" is mediated by the revealer; cf. AJ 60:18ff, where Adam and Eve receive the perfect "gnosis" through the tree of knowledge from the revealer, and AJ 57:8 where the tree of knowledge is equated with the "thought of light;" 2) the con-

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[1] See chapter II, 71.

ception of the tree as a means of salvation through which immortality is attained; cf. OW 158:24ff where the tree of knowledge is the means, the power of God, by which the Gnostic is delivered from the sleep of demons and reaches the tree of life.[1]

These distinctive Gnostic interpretations are without parallels in the early patristic exegesis of Genesis 2-3. The writings of Clement of Alexandria and Origen exhibit a thorough-going allegorization of the paradise account of Genesis in which eating from the tree of knowledge was understood in several different ways, but never as the "power" or "secret revelation" which bestows salvation.[2] Against opponents who interpret the sexual relations of marriage as the sin of eating of the tree of knowledge, Clement says that if

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[1] In the ophitic summary of Irenaeus (AH I.30.7), the tree of knowledge is similarly conceived of as the "power" of redemption. Sophia-Prunikos sends the serpent to "seduce" Adam and Eve into breaking the command of her apostate son Ialdabaoth. The plan is successful since both Adam and Eve eat of the tree of which God, i.e. the Demiurge, had forbidden them not to eat. But when they had eaten they knew the "power" which is above all and turned away from their creators.

[2] Only fragments of Origen's Commentary on Genesis are extant and none of these are from Genesis 2-3; see L. Lewis, The Commentary: Jewish and Pagan Backgrounds of Origen's Commentaries with Emphasis on the Commentary of Genesis (Unpublished Harvard Ph.D.thesis, 1958), 14f, n. 1.

Origen did not treat the Genesis paradise account in the Homilies on Genesis, not at least as they have come down to us. But there are references to his exegesis of Genesis 2-3 scattered in his other works. For a comparison of Origen's interpretation of the paradise account with that of Philo, see Lewis, The Commentary, 150-181.

this is so, then knowledge of the truth is eating of the tree of life. He prefers to interpret the tree of knowledge as not to transgress in marriage.[1]

In Hom. on Joshua VIII, 6, Origen interprets Christ as the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil as the good of Christ and the evil of the devil in us. We are to crucify the evil.[2] Origen denies that there will be a tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the final restoration of all things, for God will be "all in all" in each person so that there will be no contrast of good and evil, no consciousness of evil, nor any desire to eat of such a tree.[3]

Epiphanius accused Origen of teaching that the paradise trees were angelic powers.[4] Origen himself says, in opposition to Celsus, that the Genesis account of the serpent, paradise, and the trees of life and knowledge must be understood allegorically.[5] A comparison of Origen's interpretation of Genesis 3:5, 7, with Gnostic exegesis is instructive. Origen interprets the phrase "Then the eyes of both were opened" (Gen. 3:7) to mean that the "eyes of sense" were opened which should have been kept shut, but the "eyes of the mind" which

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1 Strom. III. 17. 104 (GCS Clem. Alex. II, 244).
2 Hom. on Josh. VIII. 6 (GCS Origen VII, 342).
3 On First Principles III. 6. 3 (GCS Origen V, 283-285).
4 Jerome, Ep. Ll. 5. 4; CSEL, LIV, Jerome's Ep. I, 404.
5 Against Celsus IV, 39 (GCS Origen I, 311-312)

enabled Adam and Eve to behold God in paradise were then closed.[1] The phrase is not taken to mean, as in Gnostic exegesis, that Adam and Eve had now received the secret "knowledge" which would enable them to attain immortality, the tree of life. But Origen did connect paradise with a secret revelation of the future. In his work "On First Principles" Origen says that when the saints depart from this life they go to paradise located somewhere on earth and are given instruction concerning the future before they begin their journey through a series of spheres, i.e. heavens, toward the heavenly kingdom.[2] However, Origen does not connect this secret instruction of the future with the tree of knowledge.

A positive interpretation of the tree of knowledge occurs in other Christian writings of the second and third centuries. Both Theophilus "To Autolycus" 2, 25, and the Epistle to Diognetus 12, 2, emphasize that the tree of knowledge itself and its fruit is good. In both works it is pointed out that it was the disobedience of Adam and Eve that brought death, not eating from the fruit of the tree. Melito, Bishop of Sardis, says in his Homily on the Passion 8:12f that Adam became prolific and lived a long life by tasting of the tree of knowledge. But he also attributes the evil inheritance that Adam gave to his children to the transgression of eating

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1 Against Celsus VII, 39 (GCS Origen II, 189-190).

2 On First Principles II. 11. 6 (GCS Origen V, 189f).

from the tree.[1]

The Gnostic interpretation of Genesis 2:9 made the tree of knowledge as important a symbol of salvation as the cross. A comparison of the functions of the cross and the tree of knowledge in the Gospel of Philip illustrates this fact. The cross has no saving significance in the Gospel of Philip. Three references to the cross are related to the chrism (115:23f; 121:12ff; 122:20). There is a reference to the cry of dereliction on the cross (116: 26f) and to the Syrian word Pharisatha, "the spread out," which is explained as meaning that "Jesus came crucifying the world" (111: 22ff). In 132:33f the cross has a cosmic significance but it functions as the barrier which prevents "the whole deity," i.e. the Demiurge and his powers, from ascending further. The tree of knowledge, on the other hand, functions as the means by which life is conferred on the Gnostic in the new paradise (cf. 122:3f). There are two paradise trees: one slew Adam, but its antitype will bring life.

In one striking passage in the so-called Gospel of Truth the cross is turned into a tree of knowledge whose fruit, Jesus, brings joy to those who eat it (EV 18:24ff). Contrary to the typical Gnostic presentation of the cross, the death of Jesus is here taken seriously. At his death Jesus is the fruit of the knowledge of the

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[1] K. Lake and S. Lake, "The Homily on the Passion by Melito Bishop of Sardis," Studies and Documents XII (Philadelphia, 1940).

Father.

The interpretation of the tree of knowledge as a symbol of the revealer-redeemer in the literature from Nag-Hammadi is paralleled in the fragment of Justin's Book of Baruch by a similar allegorical interpretation of the tree of life. Justin's Book of Baruch, the the product of a Jewish Christian Gnosticism,[1] is preserved in Hippolytus' Refutation of All Heresies (V, 26).[2]

According to Justin Moses spoke of paradise and its trees in veiled terms because "not all hold the truth" (Ref. V, 26, 6). Therefore, Genesis 2:8f must be interpreted allegorically. The statement in Genesis 2:8 that "God planted paradise in Eden to the East" means "before the face of Eden." In the Old Testament and LXX Eden designates the land of paradise, but for Justin Eden is the personification of earth or matter and one of the three cosmic principles (26:7, 14). The trees in paradise are allegorically understood as angels. Eden worked through her angel Naas, the third of the maternal angels, who is both the snake of Genesis 3 and the

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[1] For examination of the Jewish background and Christian bias of the fragment, see Ernst Haenchen, "Das Buch Baruch," ZTK, 50 (1953), 123-158.

[2] For the text, see W. Voelker, Quellen zur Geschichte der christlichen Gnosis (Tuebingen, 1932), 27ff.

Compare also the allegorical interpretation of Genesis 2-3 in the Megale Apophasis attributed by Hippolytus to Simon Magus (Ref. VI, 12ff). Paradise is the womb, Eden the afterbirth. The paradise rivers are the four senses and the flaming sword is the seventh all encompassing power or principle. Simon's "great tree" is an allegory on the primal principle fire which is based on Daniel 4 (Ref. VI, 9). See E. Haenchen, "Gab es eine vorchristliche Gnosis?" ZTK, 49 (1952), 337f.

tree of knowledge. Elohim, the second cosmic principle, sent his angel Baruch to contend with Naas and gain adherents for himself. Baruch, the third of the paternal angels, is the tree of life (26:6).

When Baruch came from Elohim he stood as the tree of life in the midst of the angels of paradise (Gen. 2:9) and commanded men to eat from every tree in paradise but the tree of knowledge, i.e. from Naas (26:22). Baruch is the heavenly revealer who was sent by Elohim to Adam and Eve, Moses, the prophets, and finally to Jesus. Naas overcame the power of Baruch and beguiled Moses and the prophets, but failed in his attempt to seduce Jesus. In anger Naas had Jesus crucified. Jesus left his body, i.e. the psychical and earthly man, to Eden on the "tree," but he ascended to the first principle, Priapus, the Good.

The figure of Baruch as the revealer presupposes the absorption of a late Jewish tradition.[1] But why has Justin connected this Baruch tradition with the paradise tree of life? The answer is given by an examination of the history of interpretation of Genesis 2:9.

The tree of life had long been allegorically interpreted as a symbol of salvation and immortality. In Philo's writings the tree of life and the tree of knowledge are symbols of the two opposing principles of good and evil. Philo had already used the tree of life as a symbol of the "heavenly man" and as a symbol of earthly man's

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[1] See. E. Haenchen, "Das Buch Baruch," 136ff.

mystical ascent to immortality. But Ghostic exegesis of Genesis 2:9 made the paradise trees symbols of the revealer as well. Justin combined, possibly for the first time, the Jewish Baruch tradition with the Gnostic interpretation of the paradise trees.

For Justin the tree of life is a symbol of the revealer Baruch, the messenger of Elohim, while the tree of knowledge remains a symbol of evil and death, Naas, the messenger of Eden. But in the Apocryphon of John the tree of knowledge is interpreted as a symbol of the revealer and the tree of life as a symbol of the "opposing spirit" who brings death. The Gnostic interpreters of Genesis by a bold reinterpretation of the paradise account and established elements of tradition made the paradise trees of life and knowledge symbols of the revealer-redeemer and the saving revelation.

Chapter V
New Testament -- Apostolic Fathers
Introduction

In the New Testament and Apostolic Fathers the tree of life is referred to explicitly only in the Apocalypse of John. There is a reference to the tree of life in the Epistle to Diognetus 12:2f, but the text does not belong to the Apostolic Fathers.[1] The vine metaphor of John 15 and the description of the cross in Ignatius Trall. 11 have been interpreted as references to the tree of life,[2] but outside of these texts there are no significant allusions to the tree of life in primitive Christian writings.[3] It is noteworthy that the tree of life is strikingly absent from primitive Christian writings outside of the John-Ignatius circle.

There is evidence that the tree of life became an important symbol for Christian writers in later periods, beginning even in the second and third centuries. Justin Martyr uses the tree of life typologically as a symbol of Jesus (Dial. 86:1) and Origen quotes Celsus as saying: "And everywhere there is mention of the tree of

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[1] Chapter 12 has long been considered spurious and frequently assigned to Hippolytus of Rome; the Epistle itself is generally dated in the early part of the third or late second century. See B. Altaner, Patrology (Freiburg, 1960), 136.

[2] See R. Bultmann, Das Evangelium des Johannes (Goettingen, 1959[16]), 406f; J. Daniélou, Primitive Christian Symbols, 37. This interpretation will be examined in detail in the following chapter.

[3] With the possible exception of Barnabas 11:10f.

life and a resurrection of the flesh by means of the tree, because I imagine their teacher was nailed to a cross (Cels. 6.34).[1] Later Christian writers, especially in the third and fourth centuries, used the tree of life as a symbol of both Jesus and the cross.[2]

The present chapter is limited to an examination of the evidence for the tree of life in primitive Christian writings. The primary texts are the following: 1) the Apocalypse of John 2:7; 22: 1-2, 14, 19; 2) John 15:1-11; 3) Ignatius, Trallians 11. Two questions need to be answered concerning a study of these texts: firstly, how are these texts relevant to a study of the history of interpretation of Genesis 2:9? and secondly, what is the point and method of the inquiry?

How do these texts fit into the history of interpretation of Genesis 2:9? In the Apocalypse of John there is a question whether

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[1] GCS Origen II, 103.

[2] The myth of the tree of life was used by Christian writers in the third and fourth centuries in three different ways: 1) the eschatological tree; e.g. the Apocalypse of Paul 21f, 45, where the tree of life is connected with the theme of a return to paradise; 2) as a prefiguration of the cross; see the Syriac Cave of Treasures; E.A. Wallis Budge, The Book of the Cave of Treasures (London, 1927), 63. This was a popular motif in early Christian art; e.g. the fourth century catacomb painting of St. Soteres; see W.L. Hildburgh, "On Palm Tree Crosses," Archaeologia, 81 (1931), 49-61; 3) as a symbol of Jesus himself; see D.J. Issaverdens, The Uncanonical Writings of the Old Testament found in the Armenian MSS. (Venice, 1900), 302f. These three interpretations of the tree of life could appear separately or in various combinations in different texts; see the fourth century poem De Pascha; Hartel, CSEL (1871), III, 305-308.

the tree of life references are derived from Genesis directly or from Jewish apocalyptic literature. In Ignatius the cross is referred to as a tree with branches and fruit in the context of a polemical attack on the teaching of the opponents. The text raises the question of the opponents use of the Old Testament and paradise imagery. In the Gospel of John there is a similar question of the sources of the Evangelist's vine imagery. Is the Evangelist's figure of the true vine drawn from the Old Testament, from Gnostic sources, or from Jewish apocalyptic literature?

The Genesis tree of life was interpreted as a symbol of immortality in both Jewish and Gnostic texts, but in each case traditional elements were modified and new elements added. A similar process of modification and absorption occurs in the Christian texts. The question which must be posed for each text is not simply how does this interpretation differ from Jewish and Gnostic interpretations, but what are the theological factors which have entered into the reinterpretation of the tree of life and have caused the imagery to be altered? The primary texts listed above will be examined exegetically.

<u>The Apocalypse of John: the Texts</u>:

Revelation 22:1-2

1) Then he showed me the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the

Lamb. 2) In the midst of the street, and on either side of the river, stood a tree of life. It yields twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree serve for the healing of the nations.[1]

Revelation 2:7b

To him who conquers I will give the right to eat of the tree of life which stands in the paradise of God.

Revelation 22:14

Blessed are those who wash their robes. They will have the right to the tree of life and will enter the gates of the city.

Revelation 22:19

And if any one takes away from the words in the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share of the tree of life and of the holy city both of which are described in this book.

Related Texts: Genesis 2:9, Ezekiel 47:1-12, I Enoch 24-25,[2] Zechariah 14:8, Barnabas 11:10, Odes of Solomon 6, 11, Paralipomena Jeremiah 9.

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[1] Translations of New Testament texts in the following chapter are based on the 25th edition of the Nestle text: Eberhard & Erwin Nestle, Kurt Aland, Novum Testamentum Graece (Stuttgart, 1963). Variant readings and questions of punctuation will be discussed in connection with the exegesis of the passages.

[2] See "Old Testament Background," 20f.

[3] See chapter II, 23-31.

The Tree of Life and the New Jerusalem.

The author of the Apocalypse gives his interpretation of the tree of life in his vision of the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:9-22:5). The vision serves as a conclusion to the last series of visions in the book (19:11-21:2) and forms an essential and fitting climax to the whole work. It sets forth in detail the establishment of the new Jerusalem which is briefly referred to in Rev. 21:2. The author introduces the vision of Babylon's destruction in a similar manner. In Rev. 16:19 he briefly mentions the destruction of Babylon and then develops the topic in detail in the following vision (Rev. 17:1ff).

The Jerusalem and Babylon visions appear as part of a carefully worked out scheme which sets them in an antithetical balance.[1] The introductory formula is the same; the vision is brought by one of the seven bowl-angels (cf. 21:9 with 17:1). The "holy" city Jerusalem, the νύμφη (21:10), is placed in contrast with the evil city Babylon, the great πόρνη (17:1). The figure of the harlot is encountered in a "desert" (17:3) while the new Jerusalem can be seen only from a high mountain (21:10). The harlot is seated upon "many waters" (17:1) which the author explains as the peoples and nations over which the city has dominion (17:15, 18). The throne of

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[1]See A. Farrer, A Rebirth of Images (Glasgow, 1949), 56; but Farrer limits the parallelism to the setting of the scene.

God and the Lamb, however, is located in the heavenly Jerusalem over the ὕδωρ ζωῆς , the "living water" given freely by the Lamb to those who thirst (22:1; cf. 7:17, 21:6, 22:17). In the plastic symbolism of the Apocalypse the imperial city is also equated with the beast, the mythical seven headed dragon which came up from the abyss (17:9; cf. Isa. 51:9). But the new Jerusalem, the holy city which descended out of heaven from God (21:10), is equated with the mythical paradise where the tree of life is located (22:1f; cf. 2:7).

As in I Enoch 24-25, the author of the Apocalypse places the heavenly Jerusalem, the throne of God and the tree of life on a high mountain. The place of the vision is the site of the city, the ὄρος μέγα καὶ ὑψηλόν. The author does not make an explicit identification of the mountain with paradise; he is following his Ezekiel text which says only that the prophet was set down upon a high mountain on which the city was located (Ezek. 40:2).

Ezekiel 47 furnishes the main features for the vision in Rev. 22:1ff.

Ezekiel 47:1	Rev. 22:1
Καὶ εἰσήγαγέν με ἐπὶ τὰ πρόθυρα τοῦ οἴκου, καὶ ἰδοὺ ὕδωρ ἐξεπορεύετο ὑποκάτωθεν τοῦ αἰθρίου κατ' ἀνατολάς...	Καὶ ἔδειξέν μοι ποταμὸν ὕδατος ζωῆς λαμπρὸν ὡς κρύσταλλον, ἐκπορευόμενον ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀρνίου.

Ezekiel 47:12	Rev. 22:2
Καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ποταμοῦ ἀναβήσεται ἐπὶ τοῦ χείλους αὐτοῦ ἔνθεν καὶ ἔνθεν πᾶν ξύλον βρώσιμον... μὴ ἐκλίπῃ ὁ καρπὸς αὐτοῦ· τῆς καινότητος αὐτοῦ πρωτοβολήσει ... καὶ ἔσται ὁ καρπὸς αὐτῶν εἰς βρῶσιν καὶ ἀνάβασις αὐτῶν εἰς ὑγίειαν.	ἐν μέσῳ τῆς πλατείας αὐτῆς καὶ τοῦ ποταμοῦ ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ξύλον ζωῆς ποιοῦν καρποὺς δώδεκα, κατὰ μῆνα ἕκαστον ἀποδιδοῦν τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὰ φύλλα τοῦ ξύλου εἰς θεραπείαν τῶν ἐθνῶν.

Cf. Genesis 2:9: Καὶ ἐξανέτειλεν ὁ θεὸς ἔτι ἐκ τῆς γῆς πᾶν ξύλον ὡραῖον εἰς ὅρασιν καὶ καλὸν εἰς βρῶσιν καὶ τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς ἐν μέσῳ τῷ παραδείσῳ...

Cf. Zech. 14:8: Καὶ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἐξελεύσεται ὕδωρ ζῶν ἐξ Ἰερουσαλήμ, τὸ ἥμισυ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν τὴν πρώτην...

Repetition of the introductory formula Καὶ ἔδειξέν μοι (22:1; cf. 21:9, 10) marks the continuation of the vision. In Rev. 22:1 the throne has taken the place of Ezekiel's temple (cf. 21:22, 22:3); thus, the river of life issues from the throne, not the threshold of the temple. In Ezekiel the water flowing forth from

the temple becomes a life giving stream which transforms the region into a paradise. In Rev. 22:1 this river is called the "water of life" (cf. Zech. 14:8), but no special significance is attached to it (cf. 7:17, 21:6, 22:17).

As in Ezekiel the key to the existence of the holy city and the temple is the presence of God (cf. Ezek. 48:35), but in the Apocalypse this means that the temple is no longer necessary. The temple in the heavenly Jerusalem is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb (21:22). The bride comes down out of heaven from God having the glory of God (21:10), without need of sun or moon since the glory of God is her light and the Lamb her lamp (21:23).

In Ezekiel's vision "every kind of tree that is good for food" lines the banks of the river; a description that echoes Genesis 2:9. In Rev. 22:2 ξύλον remains singular as in Gen. 2:9 but is used collectively to include trees on both sides of the river (cf. Ezek. 47:12). In Genesis 2:9 and Ezek. 47:12 "every" tree is good for food, but in Rev. πᾶν disappears from the text and the tree of life is given the function of bearing fruit every month. The Genesis statement that the tree of life is located "in the midst of paradise" has been altered to refer to the heavenly Jerusalem. The tree of life is now located "in the midst of the street" instead of "in the midst of paradise."[1]

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[1] The phrase ἐν μέσῳ τῆς πλατείας αὐτῆς should be

A similar combination of the Genesis paradise account with Ezekiel 47 occurs in Barnabas 11:10, but in Barnabas eating from the fruit of the trees is understood as a reference to baptism. Barn. 11:10: εἶτα τί λέγει; Καὶ ἦν ποταμὸς ἔλκων ἐκ δεξιῶν, καὶ ἀνέβαινεν ἐξ αὐτοῦ δένδρα ὡραῖα· καὶ ὃς ἂν φάγῃ ἐξ αὐτῶν, ζήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα! Barnabas identifies the ever fruitful trees which bestow eternal life as Christians who are cleansed by the waters of baptism (Barn. 11:11).[1] The repetition of the promise that "whoever eats of these will live forever," a paraphrase of LXX Gen. 3:22, is interpreted to mean that whoever "hears" and "believes" these things spoken "shall live forever" (cf. Barn. 11:8).[2]

Such a combination of the Genesis paradise account and Ezekiel 47 in both Rev. 22:1f and Barnabas 11:10 suggests the possibility of

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connected with Καὶ τοῦ ποταμοῦ rather than with v. 1 as in Westcott-Hort, Goodspeed, the RSV and NEB. The Nestle text, Tischendorf, von Soden, and the KJV all begin a new sentence with "in the midst of the street." This is the correct punctuation.

[1] In Odes of Solomon 6:7ff the river of Ezek. 47, the "water of life" (6:17), is understood as the water of baptism; and in Ode 11:6ff the drink of this "living water" restores man to paradise and to the fruit of its trees. See J.H. Bernard, "The Odes of Solomon," Texts and Studies (London, 1912), VIII, No. 3, 55ff, 74; E. Segelberg, "The Baptismal Rite according to some of the Coptic-Gnostic texts of Nag-Hammadi," TU 80 (Berlin, 1962), 117-128.

[2] J. Daniélou has suggested that the Barnabas midrash brings together Jn. 6:51 and Rev. 2:7 and implies the assimilation of the Eucharist to the tree of life. This is improbable; the midrash is a combination of Old Testament texts which Barnabas has possibly taken from a testimonia collection or from his teachers. See J. Daniélou, Primitive Christian Symbols, 49.

an independent source. The author of the Apocalypse may have utilized a testimonia collection of Old Testament texts in which Ezekiel 47 and Genesis 2-3 had already been combined,[1] but it is also possible that the combination merely represents an association of similar content and gives no evidence whatsoever of an underlying source.[2]

As in Jewish apocalyptic literature the fruit of the tree of life is available only in the new age. In Barnabas 11 the interpretation of baptism as eating from the trees of life parallels the Gnostic understanding that immortality, the tree of life, is a present possession, but for the author of the Apocalypse it remains a future possession.

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1 Barnabas 11 is a loosely connected series of Old Testament texts including Psalm 1 and Ezekiel 47 which appears to be based on such a testimonia collection. For discussion of the question of testimonia material in Barnabas, see R.A. Kraft, "Barnabas' Isaiah Text and the 'Testimony Book' Hypothesis," JBL, 79 (1960), 336-350. Kraft suggests that Barnabas may have used testimonia material from short, independent documents having a testimonia type format, each of which had its own organizational theme. See also K. Stendahl, The School of St. Matthew (Uppsala, 1954), 207-217.

2 Odes of Solomon 6, 11, show that similar paradise materials were grouped together by association around a central theme like the "water of life." See note 1, 145.

The older literary criticism posited a Jewish written source for Rev. 21:9-22:5 which the author of the Apocalypse had modified with Christian additions; e.g. W. Bousset, Die Offenbarung Johannis (Goettingen, 1906), 454. But analysis of language and idioms in Rev. 21:9-22:5 does not support such a hypothesis; see R.H. Charles, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John (New York, 1920), II, 155f. For a general survey of literary criticism, see J. Moffatt, "The Revelation of St John the Divine," The Expositor's Greek Testament (New York, 1910), V, 292ff.

The tree of life yields twelve crops of fruits, or twelve kinds of fruit, once every month, for the twelve tribes of the new Jerusalem . Comparison of tribes with months has parallels in the Old Testament (cf. I Chron. 27:1ff). The number twelve is symbolical of the ideal body of apostles who are to govern Israel in the new age and the twelve tribes, the community of the redeemed (Rev. 7:4ff; Matt. 19:28). In Rev. 21:12-14 the twelve gates and twelve foundations of the heavenly city are the twelve tribes and twelve apostles of the Lamb respectively. The reference to twelve crops, or twelve kinds of fruit, and the twelve months may be a reference to the number of those "sealed" (12,000 times 12), the 144,000 of the vision in Rev. 7:4-8. The redeemed community receives the fruit of immortality, the tree of life, month by month. A Synoptic parallel occurs in the Marcan feeding of the five thousand where the twelve baskets of fragments seems to be related to the twelve disciples as representatives of the twelve tribes (Mk. 6:43; Mt. 14:20; cf. Mt. 15:37).

In the Apocalypse the fruit of the tree of life feeds the Gentiles as well as the twelve tribes of Israel. The φύλλα of the tree are for the "healing" of the nations (22:2).[1] A parallel occurs in the vision of the countless multitude from every nation and peoples standing before the throne with palm branches in their

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[1] Cf. Barn. 11:8 where the φύλλα which will not fade (Psalm 1) are the words which the Christian utters in faith and hope for the conversion of many (cf. Odes of Solomon 10:1ff).

hands (Rev. 7:9). The palm branches, a common symbol for the tree of life, symbolizes victory over death (cf. Pseudo-Matt. 21; Hermas Sim. 8.2.1). The healing power of the tree of life is a mythological element which was revived and given new prominence in Jewish apocalyptic literature (cf. Apoc. Moses 9:3).[1] The healing is not purification or cleansing necessary for worship (cf. 2 Chron. 30:18-20), but deliverance from the sickness that brings death, i.e. the healing of a medicine of immortality.

A striking parallel to the vision of the tree of life in the Apocalypse occurs in Paralipomena of Jeremiah 9.[2] The last chapter (9:1-32) of the Paralipomena contains Jeremiah's account of his vision of Christ and the tree of life which he saw in a trance while offering sacrifice in Jerusalem. Jeremiah awakens out of his trance to predict the coming of Jesus Christ to earth after 477 years, and the descent of the tree of life. When the tree of life which is planted in paradise (Gen. 2:9) comes to earth it will make all the unfruitful trees to bear fruit, but the boastful trees with high

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1 See chapter II, 54ff.

2 The title of the Greek MS edited by J.R. Harris is "The Paralipomena of Jeremiah the Prophet;" idem, The Rest of the Words of Baruch (London, 1889). Harris dates the work in 136 A.D. on the basis of the statement that 66 years had elapsed since the captivity (Jerusalem, 70 A.D.). The Paralipomena may be Christian in toto, or possibly a work based on a Jewish kernel. See R.H. Pfeiffer, "The Literature and Religion of the Pseudepigrapha," IB, (New York, 1952), I, 424.

branches will wither and be bent over, i.e. are judged (9:14f; cf. Jn. 15:2-6). The unfruitful trees which bloom may symbolize the Gentiles since the passage connects the coming of Christ with preaching to the Gentiles (9:18). It is not clear whether the tree of life is meant to symbolize Jesus. J.R. Harris interprets it as a reference to the victory of the cross.[1] But the Armenian MSS take the tree of life to be Jesus himself; "And after 375 years more, he shall come upon the earth, he who is the tree of life, planted in the midst of paradise."[2]

Theological reflection on the meaning of the death of Jesus led Christian writers to interpret both Jesus and the cross as the paradise tree of life. The author of the Apocalypse, however, does not make either identification.[3] He focuses attention on the tree of life as a symbol of immortality and emphasizes its purpose as a mythical tree of healing.

The Tree of Life as a Reward for the Saints.

For the author of the Apocalypse the establishment of the

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[1] J.R. Harris, The Rest of the Words of Baruch, 45f. Cf. Barnabas 12:1 where the ξύλον which "falls and rises up" is taken to mean the cross. For Barnabas the basic identification is σταυρός equals ξύλον (cf. 11:6, 8; 5:13).

[2] D.J. Issaverdens, The Uncanonical Writings of the Old Testament found in the Armenian MSS, 274f, 302.

[3] Richard Roberts, "The Tree of Life," ExpT, 25 (1913-14), 332, suggested that the tree of life in Revelation stands as a symbol of the cross. In Acts τὸ ξύλον equals σταυρός (cf. Acts 5:30, 10:39; cf. I Pt. 2:24), but not so in Revelation.

heavenly Jerusalem means the restoration of paradise and its mythical tree of life. As in I Enoch 25 the tree of life is the reward for the righteous in the new age. There are three passages in the Apocalypse which qualify the right to the tree of life: Rev. 2:7, 22:14, and 22:19.

In Rev. 2:7 the tree of life is a reward promised to the church at Ephesus. The tree of life is used in this passage as a symbol of immortality, one of a series of rewards that are held out to the "faithful." The promised reward in Rev. 2:7 is part of a literary pattern which occurs in each of the letters to the seven churches (2:1-3:22).

The literary pattern is as follows:

1) Representation -- the author of the letter, his titles, and the name of the church addressed: Rev. 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14.

2) Account of past history and present situation: Rev. 2:2f, etc.

3) Call for repentance: Rev. 2:5a, etc.

4) Exhortations: Rev. 2:5b, etc.

5) Promise: the promise to the "one who conquers" not only follows a stereotyped phaseology (2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21), but mostly contains metaphors taken from the Old Testament which describe the reward.[1]

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[1] Klaus Baltzer sees in this pattern the influence of the covenant form; idem, Das Bundesformular (Neukirchen, 1960), 168f. J. M. Rife suggests that the seven short prophecies in Amos 1-2 were the literary model for the letters; idem, "The Literary Background of Rev. 2-3," JBL, 60 (1941), 179-182. See also M. Hubert, "L'architecture des lettres aux sept Églises," RB, 67 (1960), 349ff.

In the letter to Smyrna the promised reward is that the one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death (2:11), and in the letter to Sardis, that his name will not be blotted out of the book of life (3:5). In the letters to Ephesus and Pergamum the one who conquers is promised the food of immortality. He will be given the fruit of the tree of life (2:7) and the hidden manna (2:17).[1]

R.H. Charles argued that the seven promises presuppose a world-wide persecution in which all the faithful are threatened with martyrdom.[2] For Charles the phrase ὁ νικῶν designates "one who has passed victoriously through the martyr's death to eternal life." νικᾶν has the connotation of faithful witness unto death; cf. Rev. 12:11: αὐτοὶ ἐνίκησαν... Καὶ οὐκ ἠγάπησαν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτῶν ἄχρι θανάτου. But Christians who remained faithful unto death are not called "martyrs" in the Apocalypse (cf. Rev. 6:9-11; 13:15; 20:4).[3] The hour of "trial" (πειρασμός) coming on the

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[1] A variant reading in 2:17 substitutes ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου for τοῦ μάννα; but it is attested only by P, and arm[1] which adds ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς.

[2] Charles concluded that the seven letters were originally written at a much earlier date and that the seven promises were added when the author edited the entire work. But the seven promises which Charles excises as later additions are part of the original literary structure of the letters. See R.H. Charles, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John, I, 45.

[3] Cf. Rev. 2:13 where Antipas of Smyrna who "was killed" is called a μάρτυς, a "faithful witness" (NEB). The word μάρτυς does not yet have the technical meaning of "martyr" (cf. Mart. Polyc. 14:2, 16:2). See H.F. von Campenhausen, Die Idee des Martyriums in der alten Kirche (Goettingen, 1964), 41-47.

world (3:10) is the time of the afflictions and sufferings connected with the "great tribulation" (cf. Mk. 13:9, 13, 19; Matt. 24:21; Lk. 21:23); not a general persecution of the church.[1] The danger in view in the seven letters to the churches is more often heresy, not martyrdom (cf. Rev. 2:14f, 2:24).

The promises in the seven letters are given to all the "faithful." The names of all faithful Christians are written in the Lamb's book of life (cf. 3:5 with 21:27), just as all the saints will escape the second death, the lake of fire (cf. 2:11 with 21:14f, 21:8). Even the promises to rule over the nations (2:26) and sit on the throne (3:21) are common apocalyptic rewards promised the elect in the new age.[2] The author of the Apocalypse uses these traditions in the same way that he uses the apocalyptic tradition of the Genesis tree of life, i.e. as a general promise of immortality.

The contributions of the author of the Apocalypse to the traditional formulation of the tree of life are the qualifications that he adds. The tree of life is reserved for "the one who conquers" (2:7). A similar qualification is added in Rev. 22:14: Μακάριοι οἱ πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν, ἵνα ἔσται ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτῶν

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[1] As in II Thess. 1:5, the sufferings of the churches are evidence of their final deliverance when they will receive the victor's crown (Rev. 2:10; cf. Acts 14:22; I Pt. 4:17).

[2] Cf. Daniel 7:22, I Enoch 108:12, Wisdom of Solomon 3:8, 1 Qp Hab. 5:4, Matt. 19:28, Lk. 22:30.

ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς .[1] The phrase οἱ πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν is equivalent to οἱ νικῶντες . Both those who conquer and those who "wash their robes" have access to the tree of life.

A textual problem in Rev. 22:14 requires comment. The Textus Receptus has the reading ποιοῦντες τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ instead of the reading πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς , but the latter has stronger MS evidence and is thus preferred by modern editors.[2] Swete points out that the preferred reading ΠΛΥΝΟΝΤΕCΤΑCCΤΟΛΑC may have arisen out of ΠΟΙΟΥΝΤΕCΤΑCĒΤΟΛΑC , though the reverse could have occurred through theological alteration motivated by legalism.[3]

There is a moral connotation associated with the reading "those who wash their robes." The promise of "white robes" was made to the worthy saints at Sardis who had not "soiled their garments" (3:4). They must be clothed in the pure white linen which is the righteous deeds of the saints (19:8). Both the white robe and the tree of life are attained by righteous conduct and loyalty to Christ (cf.

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1 Note the parallel in I En. 25:4: οὐδεμία γὰρ ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ἅψασθαι αὐτοῦ μέχρι τῆς μεγάλης κρίσεως.

2 Modern editors are practically unanimous: cf. Tischendorf, Westcott-Hort, Goodspeed, Moffatt, RSV, NEB; von Soden adopts the former reading. Cf. the following MS evidence: πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν ℵ.A. 7. 38. vg. aeth.] ποιοῦντες τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ B. al. pler. cop. syr. Tert. Cyp.

3 H.B. Swete, The Apocalypse of St. John (London, 1907[2]), 307.

6:9-11; 7:14; Matt. 22:11-14). There is to be no entrance into the heavenly city and no access to the tree of life for the one who loves falsehood, or for the sorcerer, murderer, fornicator, or idolater (22:15). These are to remain "outside" (ἔξω). The two passages, 22:15 and 21:8, are almost doublets; "outside" the city are all classes of sinners (cf. Matt. 22:13). Christ will reward the holy city and the tree of life to the saints on the basis of their works (22:12).

The conception of the tree of life as a reward for the saints was such a traditional part of apocalyptic imagery that the author of the Apocalypse uses it as a negative warning against tampering with his book. There is no need to bracket 22:19 as an editorial note.[1] This is the final qualification added by the author to the tree of life tradition: ἐάν τις ἀφέλῃ ἀπὸ τῶν λόγων τοῦ βιβλίου τῆς προφητείας ταύτης, ἀφελεῖ ὁ θεὸς τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς. The passage is a traditional warning against increasing or taking away the words of God (cf. Deut. 4:2; 12:32), but now combined with the Genesis tree of life.

Summary.

The conception of the tree of life in the Apocalypse has its closest parallels in Jewish apocalyptic works like I Enoch 24-25,

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[1] See, for example, R.H. Charles, op. cit., II, 222f; and J. Moffatt, op. cit., V, 492f.

but there is no evidence of a literal dependence. Ezekiel 47 furnishes the main features for the vision in Rev. 22:1f. The author reinterprets and combines Ezekiel 47 with other materials; e.g. the tradition that the tree of life stood in the midst of paradise. The similar combination of Ezekiel 47 and Genesis 2-3 in Barnabas and the Apocalypse suggests the possibility of an independent source, but the combination may be due simply to the association of similar content.

In the Apocalypse the tree of life is a symbol of immortality, the reward promised the saints in the new age. This is the traditional conception of the tree of life found in Jewish apocalyptic literature. But the author of the Apocalypse limits the right to the tree of life to those who "conquer" and those who "wash their robes" and warns that anyone who tampers with his book of prophecy will have his share of the tree of life taken away. The author has added a slight allegorical touch to his interpretation. The tree of life will feed the community of the redeemed, Jew and Gentile, with the food of immortality and its leaves will be for the healing of the nations.

As in Gnostic literature, the author of the Apocalypse connects Christ with the tree of life, but not as a revealer figure who speaks through the paradise trees. Christ is the one who promises

the tree of life to the saints, i.e. to those who maintain righteous conduct and who remain faithful. In the Apocalypse the tree of life is neither a symbol of the cross nor of Jesus; it remains a symbol of immortality.

The Gospel of John: the primary Text.

John 15:1-11.

1) The true vine, it is I; and my Father is the gardener. 2) Every branch of mine that does not bear fruit, he cuts away; and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. 3) You have already been cleansed by the word which I have spoken to you. 4) Remain in me, as I in you. Just as no branch can bear fruit by itself, unless it remains united to the vine, neither can you, unless you remain united to me. 5) The vine, it is I; you are the branches. He who remains united with me, as I with him, will bear much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. 6) If a man does not remain united with me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. 7) If you remain united with me, and my words remain in you, ask whatever you will, and you shall have it. 8) When you bear plenty of fruit, and show yourselves to be my disciples, my Father is glorified. 9) As the Father has loved me, so I have

loved you; remain in my love. 10) If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. 11) I have spoken these things to you, so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

Related Texts: Isaiah 5:1ff; Psalm 80:8-16; Didache 9:2; Apocryphon of John 56:12, 57:20; cf. Acts of Thomas 36; Mart. Matt. 4ff.

The True Vine.

The vine imagery of John 15 has generally been compared with the use of the vine-figure in the Old Testament for the people of Israel.[1] However, R. Bultmann and E. Schweizer have maintained that the vine imagery goes back directly to the myth of the tree of life and is not dependent on an Old Testament-Jewish tradition.[2] But the only significant evidence adduced in support of this conclusion has been drawn from the comparatively late Mandean texts. Examination of the history of interpretation of Genesis 2:9 contributes to this discussion.

The "Ego eimi" formula in 15:1 is the abrupt starting point of the vine discourse. John 15:1, 5, have a self-presentation form

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[1] Cf. C.K. Barrett, The Gospel according to St. John (London, 1962), 393f; C.H. Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel (Cambridge, 1958), 411.

[2] E. Schweizer, Ego Eimi (Goettingen, 1939), 39f; R. Bultmann, Das Evangelium des Johannes, 407.

similar to that of the other "Ego eimi" sayings of the Gospel (cf. Jn. 6:35, 8:12, 10:11, 11:25f, 14:6). According to Bultmann the "Ego eimi" phrase in the Gospel of John should be described as a "recognition formula" since the content (vine, bread, etc.) is known beforehand from the religious tradition.[1] In the "recognition formula," contrary to other forms of the "Ego eimi" formula, the ἐγώ is predicate, not subject.[2] Thus, in 15:1 ἡ ἄμπελος ἡ ἀληθινή is the subject.

In 15:5 the "Ego eimi" formula of 15:1 is repeated, but now with reference to the disciples as branches of the vine. A promise and a warning which sum up the thought of verse 4 follows: "He who remains united with me, as I with him, will bear much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." In 15:6 there is an emphatic

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[1] S. Schulz has attempted to make a distinction between the "Ego eimi" formula and the imagery connected with it. He finds that the "Ego eimi" formula and structure of the sayings is Gnostic while the imagery is drawn mainly from Judaism. See S. Schulz, Komposition und Herkunft der johannischen Reden (Stuttgart, 1960), 84-90; 117f. But the distinction between the Gnostic "Ego eimi" and the Old Testament imagery ignores the fact that the "Ego eimi" formula occurs in many religious traditions, including the Old Testament; see Bultmann, Das Evangeliums des Johannes, 167f, n. 2.

An equally wrong solution is attempted by P. Borgen. He maintains that the "Ego eimi" in John's Gospel is a formula to be used when a word from the Old Testament is to be identified with a person or figure in the first person singular. P. Borgen, Bread from Heaven (Leiden, 1965), 68ff.

[2] Bultmann distinguishes four different types of the "Ego eimi" formula. Only in the "recognition formula" is the "Ego" predicate. See Bultmann, op. cit., 167f, n. 2.

warning against the consequences of being unfaithful. The man who does not remain faithful suffers the fate of an unfruitful branch which is cast into the fire and burned.

The Evangelist appears to follow the pattern of Wisdom and Gnostic Kerygma in 15:1ff. H. Becker has shown that there are three primary elements in such a pattern: 1) the self-presentation of the revealer; cf. Jn. 15:1, 5; 2) the invitation or call to decision, presented frequently in personal or ethical terms; cf. Jn. 15:4f; 3) the promise to those who respond to the call of the redeemer, combined often with a warning of dire consequences for those who do not; cf. Jn. 15:5-6.[1] If the Evangelist has followed such a pattern, he has altered it with his own material and emphases.[2]

The vine-figure which dominates the first eight verses of John 15 is in part an ecclesiological metaphor. The Father, ὁ γεωργός, is the one who cares for the vine, and the disciples are its branches, κλήματα. This use of the vine metaphor parallels the Old

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[1] H. Becker, Die Reden des Johannesevangeliums und der Stil der gnostischen Offenbarungsrede (Goettingen, 1956), 14ff, 54.

[2] Bultmann and Becker have maintained that John 15:1ff follows a Gnostic revelatory source which the Evangelist expanded. See Bultmann, Das Evangelium des Johannes, 406ff; Becker, Die Reden des Johannesevangeliums, 109-111, 134. But Bultmann's theory of the "Offenbarungsreden" source is problematic. For an extensive review of the theory and criticism of it, see D.M. Smith, Jr., The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel (New Haven, 1965), 57-115.

Testament figure of the vine as a symbol of the people of Israel. In LXX Psalm 79 (80) Israel is the vine of God's planting which had been brought out of Egypt (79:9, 15). The vine grew and put forth great branches, κλήματα , which it extended to the sea (79:12), but the vine was ravaged by men and beasts. The Psalmist appeals to Yahweh, the owner and husbandman, to look upon and restore his vine, i.e. Israel, the man of his right hand, the son of man whom formerly he had made strong for himself (79:15ff).[1] Isaiah 5:1ff depicts Israel as the vineyard of the Lord where the choicest vines were planted. The vineyard is Judah; its owner, Yahweh (5:7). Yahweh cared for and protected his vineyard, but since it yielded only wild grapes, he will abandon it to destruction. In Jeremiah 2:21 Israel is described as a fruitful and true (ἀληθινή) vine planted by God which has turned into bitterness, a strange vine (ἡ ἄμπελος ἡ ἀλλοτρία). Ezekiel asks and then declares that as vine branches are fit for burning, the vine of Jerusalem must be consumed by fire (15:1-8; cf. 19:10-14).

It is noteworthy that in the Old Testament the vine metaphor occurs primarily in a polemical context where Israel is degenerate and has brought upon herself the wrath of Yahweh.[2] Psalm 79 (80)

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[1] Cf. the Biblical Antiquities of Ps.-Philo 12:8: Moses is made to pray for the vine of God's planting, a cosmic vine which stretches its branches to the throne of God. The vine is equated with the "house" of Israel (cf. also II Esdras 5:23ff).

[2] See E. Schweizer, Ego Eimi, 39.

is an exception in that the Psalmist attributes the plight of Israel to the destruction inflicted upon it by others. Nowhere in the Old Testament is the vine a symbol of the Messiah.[1]

A parallel to the Evangelist's figure of the "true vine" occurs in the Hodayot imagery of the "planting" (1QH 8:4ff).[2] The usual designation is "eternal planting" but in 1QH 8:10 it is stated that the holy shoot grows up into a "true planting" or "planting of truth." The "planting," a metaphor possibly drawn from Isaiah, is used as a symbol of the Qumran community.[3] As Jesus is the "true vine" and the disciples its branches, the Qumran community is the "true planting" which grows up among trees of life and becomes a cosmological tree (8:5f, 11). It has been suggested that the "shoot," the stem from which the planting grows, refers to the Messiah to come, or the Teacher of righteousness, and thus provides a striking parallel to John 15.[4] But this interpretation is a conjecture without support in the passage. As ecclesiological symbols, however, the "true vine" and "true planting" are significant parallels.

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[1] But cf. II Baruch 36:1ff where a vine figure is a symbol of the Messiah. The passage is part of a larger vision of the forest and cedar with parallels in Ezek. 17.

[2] See chapter II, 36-45.

[3] Cf. 1QS 8:4-6, 11:7-9; and other texts cited in chapter II.

[4] See J. Daniélou, Primitive Christian Symbols, 36.

The metaphor of the true vine in John 15:1 is both a Christological and an ecclesiological symbol. Jesus is the vine in its entirety, and the disciples are branches in the vine, parts of the greater unity whose totality is Jesus.[1] In the Evangelist's use of the metaphor the branches are unable to bear fruit unless they are ἐν ἐμοί , i.e. part of the vine of life, Jesus. Apart from Jesus the disciples are able to do nothing (15:5). The primary emphasis in the passage falls on the unity of Jesus with the disciples. In other contexts the concept of unity is connected with the Eucharist (cf. I Cor. 10:16f; Ign. Phld. 4:1; Didache 9:4).

The vine imagery has eucharistic associations in the Synoptic accounts of the last supper and in the prayers of Didache. In the Synoptic accounts of the last supper the contents of the cup are described as τὸ γένημα τῆς ἀμπέλου (Mk. 14:25; Lk. 22:18; Mt. 26:29). The fruit of the vine is an anticipation of the life of the new age. The vine imagery occurs in the thanksgiving over the cup in Didache 9:2: "We give thanks to you, our Father, for the holy vine of David which you have made known to us through Jesus, your servant." The vine has the meaning in this context of the church as the people of God, now revealed through Jesus.[2] The

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[1] For a comparison of John 15 with Stoic conceptions, see E.R. Goodenough, "John a primitive Gospel," JBL, 64 (1945), 167.

[2] Cf. Justin, Dial. 110:4: ἡ γὰρ φυτευθεῖσα ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄμπελος καὶ χριστοῦ ὁ λαὸς αὐτοῦ ἐστι.

Evangelist's conception of the vine goes further. Jesus is identified as the vine in whom the disciples dwell and receive their life.

Later interpreters in the third and fourth centuries interpreted the vine as the paradise tree whose fruit yields wine for the Eucharist.[1] But this eucharistic speculation does not explain the Johannine imagery of the vine. In John 15 the vine does not have eucharistic associations; it depicts the unity of Jesus with the disciples as a unity in love in which the Father's work is carried out in the church, not a sacramental unity.[2]

As a symbol which explains Jesus' relationship to the disciples, the vine metaphor parallels Ignatius' description of the cross as a symbol of the believer's union with Christ (Trall. 11). The cross is a tree whose branches are Christians, members of Christ who bear incorruptible fruit. For Ignatius the cross is the means by which

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[1] In the Acts of Thomas 36 the drink of the "true vine" is connected with the ambrosial food of the world to come; the reading of the Greek text appears based on John 15:1: καὶ τοῦ ποτοῦ τῆς ἀμπέλου τῆς ἀληθινῆς (cf. Acts of Thomas 146); in the Syriac text "the incorruptible food of the tree of life and the drink (of the vine?) of life are linked together. See. A.F.J. Klijn, The Acts of Thomas (Leiden, 1962), 84, 143, 294. In the Martyrdom of Matthew 4ff the staff of Jesus is planted by the door of the church at Smyrna and becomes a paradise tree, a mighty vine, whose fruit produces wine for the Eucharist. Lipsius-Bonnet, Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha (1898), II, 1, 220. Cf. also the pseudo-Cyprianic poem De Pascha, a fourth century poem based on earlier sources. See E.S. Greenhill, "The Child in the Tree," Traditio, 10 (1954), 338ff. For discussion of other parallels, see M. Werner, The Formation of Christian Dogma (London, 1957), 206-209.

[2] See H. Koester, "History and Cult in the Gospel of John and in Ignatius of Antioch," JThC, 1 (1965), 120-122.

the Christian becomes a "member" of Christ and achieves "union" with God. There is evidence that Ignatius has drawn his imagery of the cross as a tree from Gnostic use of the myth of the tree of life.[1] Gnostic interpreters of Genesis 2-3 used the paradise trees as symbols of the Gnostic revealer-redeemer, symbols of alien man's unification with the unknown Father.[2] The vine imagery of John 15, not entirely explained by the Old Testament and Qumran parallels, functions in a similar way as a symbol of the "unity" of the redeemer with the disciples. The myth of the tree of life, and in particular the history of interpretation of Genesis 2:9, provides the key background for this use of the vine metaphor.

As we have already noted, Philo's allegorical interpretation of Genesis 2:9 made the tree of life a symbol of the heavenly man, the goal earthly man could reach by means of the mystical attainment of perfect virtue. Gnostic interpreters of Genesis, as illustrated by the literature from Nag-Hammadi, made the trees of life and knowledge symbols of the heavenly redeemer who brought the perfect and saving knowledge to man. The tree of life is the vine, the cypress and the cosmological tree in one. The interpretation of the Genesis trees of life and knowledge in the literature from Nag-Hammadi parallels the Mandean conception of the vine as the tree of life, the

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[1] On the interpretation of Trall. 11, see the following section, 169ff.

[2] See chapter IV, 109ff.

Savior-deity who carries the soul to its heavenly home.

The vine imagery was drawn into the myth of the tree of life in Wisdom and Gnostic use of Genesis traditions. The Evangelist not only follows the pattern of Wisdom and Gnostic Kerygma, he shares their use of Old Testament metaphors and traditions. As in Gnostic exegesis of Genesis where the old mythological symbols were given a new mythological content, in John 15:1ff the vine metaphor has received a new dimension as a symbol of the unity of the redeemer with the disciples.

Parallels from both Wisdom and Gnostic literature include similarities in style as well as interpretation. In Sirach 24 Wisdom is personified as a sacred tree of life in a passage which combines the principal sacred trees of the ancient Near East. Sirach 24:17: "Like a vine I caused loveliness to bud, and my blossoms became glorious and abundant fruit." In the Apocryphon of John 56:12 the revealer who explains the mystery of the paradise tree of life is introduced in the first person singular: "Their tree was planted as the tree of life; but I will proclaim to you the mystery of their life" (ⲡⲉ ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ϯⲛⲁⲧⲁⲙⲉ ⲧⲏⲩⲧⲛ̄ ⲉⲡⲙⲩⲥⲧⲏⲣⲓⲟⲛ; cf. AJ 57:20). The allegory of the five paradise trees is presented in a similar I-style.[1]

But if the Evangelist has drawn the vine metaphor from Wisdom

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[1] See chapter IV, 120.

and Gnostic Kerygma, he has demythologized the metaphor by relating the vine to the historical work of Jesus and the church. The vine metaphor is not a symbol of a mythical redeemer, but of the historical man Jesus who loved his disciples and calls them to carry out his example of love (15:9f, 12).[1] The unity of Jesus with his disciples is a unity in loved based on the life and work of the man Jesus and the continuation of the Father's work in the church.

For the Evangelist the vine metaphor explains the meaning of the cross and the mission of the disciples, John 15:9f: "As the Father loved me, so also I loved you; remain in my love. If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love . . ." The Father's love is manifested in the cross (cf. Jn. 3:14ff). Jesus kept the commandments of his Father; he laid down his life for his friends (15:10, 13; cf. Rom. 5:7f). The unity of the disciples with Jesus as symbolized in the vine is not a sacramental unity, but a unity which has its basis in the love of Jesus for the disciples and the disciples' love for one another (15:12, 17). The disciples are chosen and appointed to "go and bear fruit" (15:16); imagery drawn from the vine metaphor of 15:1f, 5, but now interpreted in terms of the commandment of love (15:10, 12, 17; 13:34).

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[1] Bultmann places 15:1-16:33 after 13:34f and understands the passage as a commentary on the commandment of love. This would solve the problem of the setting for John 15-17 (cf. 14:31, the apparent conclusion to the farewell discourses), but there is no MSS support. Bultmann, Das Evangelium des Johannes, 406.

Summary.

Discussion of the background of the vine metaphor in John 15:1ff has posed the following question: Is the Evangelist's vine metaphor derived from the Old Testament use of the vine as a symbol of Israel or does it go back directly to the myth of the tree of life? The history of interpretation of Genesis 2:9 provides the key background necessary to answer this question.

In the first place, it should be noted that the vine metaphor in John 15:1ff as an ecclesiological symbol is close to the Old Testament use of the vine in Psalm 79 (80), Isa. 5:1ff, to represent the people of Israel, and similar also to the Hodayot imagery of the "true planting" as a symbol of the Qumran community. But these parallels do not adequately explain the use of the vine in John 15. The eucharistic associations of the vine imagery often noted in this connection are of no help either since the vine in John 15:1ff does not depict a sacramental unity.

A noteworthy parallel to John 15:1ff occurs in Ignatius Trall. 11 where the cross is depicted as a tree with branches and is a symbol of the believer's union with Christ. Other significant parallels to both Trall. 11 and John 15:1ff occur in the Philonic, Wisdom and Gnostic interpretation of the Genesis trees of life and knowledge. In Jewish Wisdom literature both the vine and the tree of life are used to symbolize the divine Wisdom, but it is especially in Gnostic

literature that the vine and the tree of life appear as synonymous terms.

The Evangelist's use of the vine metaphor is analogous to the Wisdom and Gnostic use of the tree of life. If the Evangelist follows the pattern of Wisdom and Gnostic Kerygma, he also shares their use of Old Testment metaphors. The vine imagery was not originally part of the myth of the tree of life but was drawn into it in Wisdom and Gnostic usage. The vine of John 15 is conceived of as a vine of life and can be equated with the mythical tree of life.

The new contribution added to the vine metaphor by the Evangelist is its use as a symbol of the unity of the man Jesus with his disciples and the continuation of the Father's work in the church. The vine is not a symbol of a mythical redeemer, but of the man Jesus who called his disciples to carry out his commandment of love.

Ignatius of Antioch.

The primary text is Trallians 11:1-2.

1) Avoid these evil offshoots, which yield deadly fruit which if a man tastes he dies outright. For these are not the planting of the Father. 2) For if they were they would appear as branches of the cross, with incorruptible fruit, for it is by the cross, by his passion, that he calls you to himself, you who are his members. The head therefore cannot exist

without members. It is God who promises union, that is himself.[1]

Related Texts in Ignatius: Smyr. 1:2; Phld. 3:1, 8:2; Trall. 6:1-2; Ign. Eph. 9:1, 10:3.

Other related texts: Gen. 3:3ff; Matt. 15:13; Philo, Plant. 44;[2] Mart. Andrew 14; Sib. Or. 5, 256-259; EV 18:24f, 36:35f; Acts of Thomas 36 (Syr.).

The True Cross.

Trallians 11 is the earliest text which speaks of the cross as a tree with branches and incorruptible fruit. Is this description of the cross merely a homiletical type illustration, or is there a specific conception of the cross which stands behind this language?

It is difficult to piece together the teachings of the opponents of Ignatius from the letters because Ignatius refers to their teachings only in the context of polemical rebuttal. Trallians 11 is a prime example of the polemical language of Ignatius. He urges his readers to avoid these opponents (cf. Phld. 2:1, 6:2, 7:2; Ign. Poly. 5:1) which he describes as wicked παραφυάδες , "offshoots," "sidegrowth." He further describes these "offshoots" as that which bears a "deadly fruit" (θανατηφόρος). He then warns: ἐὰν γεύσηταί τις, παρ' αὐτὰ ἀποθνήσκει. This warning is phrased with

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[1] Translations of passages in the Ignatian letters are based on the text of Karl Bihlmeyer, Die apostolischen Vaeter (Tuebingen, 1956).

[2] See chapter III, 87f.

allusion to the Genesis paradise account; cf. LXX Gen. 3:3: Οὐ φάγεσθε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ οὐδὲ μὴ ἅψησθε αὐτοῦ ἵνα μὴ ἀποθάνητε . Adam and Eve ate of its fruit and brought death through their disobedience (Gen. 3:19; cf. Rom. 5:12; II Baruch 23:4). This emphatic warning by Ignatius appears to be directed against a type of Old Testament exegesis held by his opponents. This type of language is very closely related to Old Testament and apocalyptic prototypes, but Ignatius himself never draws his own figures from such materials. Evidence that Ignatius had debated with his opponents concerning the right interpretation of scripture occurs in the letters.

Ignatius reports a debate between himself and certain opponents in Philad. 8:2. The opponents had said: "If I do not find it in the charters (ἀρχεῖα), I do not believe in the gospel."[1] To the statement of the opponents Ignatius had replied, "But it is written." The opponents answered, "This is the question." Ignatius then proceeds from the past debate to his present argument. He says that for him the charters are Jesus Christ and the inviolable (ἄθικτος) charters are his cross, death and resurrection, and faith through him.

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[1] A. Souter, Text and Canon of the New Testament (London, 1954[2]), 147, punctuates Phld. 8:2 so that "in the Gospel" is in apposition to "the archives" and thus a reference to the Gospels as written works. But ἀρχεῖα is better understood as meaning the Old Testament. For discussion of the passage, see H. Koester, Synoptische Ueberlieferung bei den apostolischen Vaetern (Berlin, 1957), 8f.

The account of the debate makes sense if it assumed that the opponents of Ignatius wanted specific evidence from the Old Testament for some theological point in dispute.[1] Ignatius said "it is written," i.e. in the Old Testament. But his opponents question his understanding of the Old Testament and the role it played for him. The opponents used scriptural interpretation as the basis of their theological position and insisted that Ignatius prove his argument from scripture.[2] But Ignatius refused to assign such fundamental value to Old Testament interpretation. He appealed rather to Christ and his cross as the basis of Christian teaching.

In the polemic against his opponents in Trall. 11 Ignatius again appeals to the cross of Christ as the distinctive basis of the Christian faith. As in Philad. 8 the scriptural interpretation and claims of his opponents appear to be reflected. In Trall. 11 Ignatius states that the "wicked offshoots" are not the planting of the Father. The terms φυτεία πατρός occur in Philad. 3:1 in a similar polemical context: "Abstain from evil plants (βοτάνη) which Jesus Christ

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[1] See R.M. Grant, "Hermeneutics and Tradition in Ignatius of Antioch: A Methodological Investigation," Archivio di Filosofia, 1-2 (1963), 190f.

[2] Einar Molland has argued that Ignatius is combatting one group of opponents, not two, and especially their exegesis of the Old Testament. He has concluded that it is their use of the Old Testament as an argument in favor of docetism which Ignatius calls Judaism. E. Molland, "The Heretics Combatted by Ignatius of Antioch," JEH, 5 (1954), 1-6.

does not cultivate (γεωργεῖν) because they are not the planting of the father." Both polemical passages are directed against a specific understanding of salvation held by the opponents which centers around their claim to be the "planting of the father."[1] The imagery is cast with paradise allusions (cf. 1QH 8; EV 36:35ff).[2] The description of the opponents as "evil plants" is a caricature of their claims.

For Ignatius the opponents which he depicts as "evil plants" are not dissenting factions of the church but heretics whose teaching brings death.[3] In his letter to the Ephesians Ignatius urges his readers to be imitators of the Lord in order that no βοτάνη τοῦ διαβόλου will be found among them. In Trall. 6:1f Ignatius links the following terms: βοτάνη = τροφή = αἵρεσις, and βοτάνη = αἵρεσις =heretics, "οἱ παρεμπλέκουσιν." These heretics "mingle" Jesus

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1 See H. Schlier, Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu den Ignatiusbriefen (Giessen, 1929), 48ff, for Mandean parallels.

2 In view of the use of φυτεία in Ignatius and the wide use of similar terminology in connection with paradise (cf. Ps. Sol. 14:2f; 1QH 6:15f, 8:9ff), it is unlikely that Ignatius is dependent upon Matt. 15:13.

3 Walter Bauer draws a distinction between heretics and sects: "Denn αἵρεσις bedeutet fuer Ign. nicht Ketzerei, sondern Sekte (s. Eph. 6:2). Und die βοτάνη soll sonst (s. zu Eph. 10:3) den Haeretiker selbst als Teufelspflanze, die nicht in des Vaters Garten gehoert, bezeichnen." W. Bauer, Die Briefe des Ignatius von Antiochia und der Polykarpbrief (Tuebingen, 1920), 35. But Bauer has oversimplified the evidence here. See the succession of terms in Trall. 6:1. See discussion by Schlier, Religionsgesch. Untersuchungen, 52f.

Christ with themselves --- a mixture which brings death to the ignorant (Trall. 6:2).

The Christian, on the other hand, has been called as a member of Christ through the passion and appears now as a branch of the cross and produces "incorruptible" fruit. The use of the term ἄφθαρτος in Trall. 11 is striking. The word has two possible meanings in this context: 1) the fruit of an incorruptible life, i.e. the moral connotation;[1] 2) the fruit of immortality. In the New Testament and early Christian literature both ἄφθαρτος and ἀφθαρσία are used synonymously with ἀθανασία .[2] The word ἄφθαρτος in Trall. 11 is best understood in this sense as a synonym for immortality.

This use of the term ἄφθαρτος is noteworthy since there are striking parallels in Philo.[3] According to Philo the man stamped with the image of God can be compared with the tree of life in the

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[1] For this interpretation, see C.C. Richardson, The Christianity of Ignatius of Antioch (New York, 1935), 31.

[2] Properly speaking only God is ἄφθαρτος ; cf. Rom. 1:23; I Tim. 1:17. Of the five occurrences of ἄφθαρτος in the New Testament two are in I Cor. (the "incorruptible" crown, 9:25, and the "incorruptible" nature of the Christian at the resurrection, 15:52), and three are in I Peter (the "incorruptible" inheritance, 1:14; cf. 1:23; 3:4).

In Justin Apology I, 10. 2, ἄφθαρτος is a reward of Christian virtue and martyrdom. In the Epistle of Diognetus both ἄφθαρτος and ἀθάνατος are used synonymously (cf. 9:2); ἀφθαρσία is the goal of the souls which are ἀθάνατος (cf. 6:8).

[3] See chapter III, 87f; cf. also Acts of Thomas 36, syr.

midst of paradise since "both are incorruptible (ἄφθαρτα) and have been accounted worthy of the most central part" (Plant. 44). Philo bases this exegesis on Gen. 2:9 while Ignatius appears to be contesting his opponents' exegesis of the same paradise text. For Philo only the man stamped with the image of God can be equated with the tree of life, not the man formed out of the earth. For Ignatius only the Christian participates in the cross and bears "incorruptible" fruit.

There are two ways of explaining the description of the cross by Ignatius as a tree which bears incorruptible fruit: 1) that Trall. 11 is representative of the increasing speculation on the cross as the tree of life and Ignatius uses the imagery merely as a general polemical device against his opponents; 2) Ignatius has taken the tree of life imagery from his Gnostic opponents and refutes them with their own imagery and terminology.

There is evidence to show that Ignatius is not only concerned with Gnostic heretics, but has utilized certain Gnostic categories himself.[1] The polemic in Trall. 9-10 (cf. Magn. 9:1; Smyr. 2-5) against the docetic denial of the reality and salvation meaning of Christ's fleshly form, suffering, death and cross shows that Ignatius

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[1] See H. Schlier, Religionsgesch. Untersuchungen, 175ff.

is concerned with Gnostic heretics.[1] By entering into Gnostic categories Ignatius makes out of the salvation event a cosmic flesh-spirit unity (cf. Ign. Eph. 7:2) in which the community shares by means of the Eucharist a sacrament conceived of as a "medicine of immortality" (Ign. Eph. 22).

It is significant that the type of Genesis interpretation which Ignatius contests in Trall. 11 is witnessed in Gnostic literature.[2] The Apocryphon of John and other writings from Nag-Hammadi show that such cryptic terminology as "to eat knowledge" and "knowledge through the tree" had a technical theological meaning based on Gnostic exegesis of the Genesis paradise account. In the Gospel of Truth it is stated that the perfect Father knows "his plantings" because he is the one who has planted them in his paradise (EV 36:35ff). Both the tree of life and the tree of knowledge were interpreted as symbols of the Gnostic revealer who brought the perfect knowledge necessary for salvation.

If Ignatius has drawn the tree of life imagery from his opponents, he has given it a new content. The branches of the tree of life are now Κλάδοι τοῦ σταυροῦ, Christians who are μέλη

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[1] H. Koester, "Haeretiker im Urchristentum," RGG (Tuebingen, 1959[3]), III, 20f. See also W. Bauer, Die Briefe des Ignatius von Antiochia, excursus to Trall. 10, 238-240; and W. Bauer, Rechtglaeubigkeit und Ketzerei im aeltesten Christentum (1964[2]), 65-72.

[2] See chapter IV, 109ff.

Χριστοῦ. But a conflict of terms results from the combination of the figure of the body with the imagery of the tree. The conflict stems from a combination of borrowed figures.

It is Paul's concept of the church as the body of Christ which Ignatius alludes to in Trall. 11:2: οὐ δύναται οὖν Κεφαλὴ χωρὶς γεννηθῆναι ἄνευ μελῶν. The actual term σῶμα is not used in the text, but is implied (cf. Smyr. 1:2, ἐν ἑνὶ σώματι τῆς ἐκκλησίας αὐτοῦ).[1] In Romans 12:5 and I Cor. 12:12, 27, Christ is conceived as the whole body of which Christians are individual members, while in Ephesians 1:22, 5:23ff (cf. Col. 2:19) the church is the body and Christ is the head. It is certain that Ignatius knew and used I Cor. (cf. Trall. 12:3 with I Cor. 9:27; Ign. Rom. 5:1 with I Cor. 4:4) and probable that he also knew and used Ephesians as well (cf. Polyc. 5:5 with Eph. 5:25, 29).[2] The allusion

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[1] Ignatius uses σῶμα only once in connection with the church (Smyr. 1:2), but besides Trall. 11:2 it is also implied in Ign. Eph. 4:2 (μέλη ὄντας τοῦ υἱοῦ).

J. Moffatt paraphrases Trall. 11:2 as follows: "He calls you. Yes, for no Head can exist without its members in the body. Only the true members are those who cling to the true cross; no one who leaves that out, on any plea of being spiritual, can possibly be a fruitful branch of the real Christ." See J. Moffatt, "An Approach to Ignatius," HTR, 29 (1936), 5.

[2] R.M. Grant, "Hermeneutics and Tradition in Ignatius," 191, has counted 46 allusions to I Cor. in the letters of Ignatius.

It is surprising that Ignatius does not use the figure of the body of Christ in connection with the Eucharist (as in I Cor. 10:16; 11:24). The apparent reason is his theological preference for σάρξ ; cf. Phld. 4:1, 7:1, where the σάρξ of Jesus is identified with the bread.

in Trall. 11 is inexact and is not clearly dependent on either Ephesians or I Corinthians. But Ignatius has employed the type of argumentation that occurs in I Cor. 12:14ff where Paul emphasizes that each organ performs an indispensable function. Ignatius is drawing upon Pauline theology in order to protect the right understanding of the church and the cross.

It is clear that Ignatius' understanding of the cross is also influenced by Pauline theology. In Ign. Ephesians 17:2-18:1 Ignatius quotes from I Cor. 1:18-20 where Paul states that the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing.

> Ign. Ephesians 18:1 (cf. I Cor. 1:18, 20).
> My spirit is devoted to the cross, which is a stumbling block to unbelievers, but to us salvation and eternal life. Where is the wise? Where is the disputer? Where is the boasting of those who are called clever?

Ignatius omits the Pauline statement that the cross is the "power of God" (1:18) and Paul's citation of the Old Testament (1:19), but has otherwise followed the Pauline text of I Cor. 1:18ff with obvious care.

It is this Pauline conception of the cross as the means of salvation that informs Ignatius' description of the cross in Trall. 11. Ignatius assumes that those who do not participate in the cross as μέλη χριστοῦ will perish, but for those who are being saved the cross is "salvation and eternal life." It is by means of the cross that the Christian becomes a "member of Christ" and achieves

"union" with God.

The concluding phrases of Trall. 11 contain one of the three allusions to unity with God and is the only passage where Ignatius speaks of God "promising union with himself."[1] This reference to union with God which appears to be out of place here takes on added significance if Ignatius is contesting a Gnostic teaching which proclaims "union" with the Father. The concept of unity and unification of alien man with the "unknown Father" was a basic tenet of Gnosticism; cf. EV 25:10-19 where "unification" is the definition of what the knowledge of the Father is to achieve for each one.[2]

In Trall. 11 the conception of the unity of Christ with the believer is thus related to the concept of the cross as the tree of life. The cross is the center of a divine movement which draws men into union with God and with one another. There are two passages in Ignatius' letters which utilize this conception of the cross besides Trall. 11. The first of these texts, Ign. Ephesians 9:1f, has striking parallels with Gnostic categories, and in the second, Smyr. 1, Ignatius has added his own particular emphasis to traditional materials.

In Ign. Ephesians 9:1 the cross is the mysterious μηχανή

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[1] Cf. Ign. Eph. 5:1 where the Christian is united with God only through the church; and Smyr. 1:2 where unity is similarly presented.

[2] See H. Jonas, The Gnostic Religion, 60.

of Christ which carries up the Christians to "the heights" as living stones prepared for the heavenly temple of the Father. The rope for this "machine" of Christ is the Holy Spirit and faith is the windlass. The cross functions as the means by which the Christian has union with the Father. Just as in the Gnostic systems where salvation is the ascent to union with the "unknown Father," in Ign. Ephesians 9:1 the cross is the instrument of salvation which carries the believer "up" to God.[1]

A noteworthy parallel to Ign. Ephesians 9:1 which depicts the cross in terms of Gnostic mythology occurs in the Martyrdom of Andrew 14.[2] Each section of the cross is assigned a function: the part which "stretches toward heaven" signifies the heavenly "Word"; the horizontal part which is "spread out on the right and left" has the twofold function of putting to flight the power of the "evil one" and of gathering into "one" the world (the souls scattered abroad); and the lower part has been planted in the earth in order to join the things that are in the earth and under the earth with

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[1] See H. Schlier, "Die μηχανή Christi," Religionsgesch. Untersuchungen, 110-124.

[2] The apostle's address to the cross may be part of the unexpurgated text of the original Acts and may date from the third century (ca. 260 A.D. ?) or even earlier. See J. Flamion, Les Actes Apocryphes de l'apôtre André.(Louvain, 1911), 131ff. Flamion unsuccessfully attempts to show that the passage was influenced by neopythagorism and neoplatonism rather than Gnosticism. See E. Kasemann, Leib und Leib Christi (Tuebingen, 1933), 70f.

the heavenly things (and draw up those that are under the earth). Following this description the cross is addressed in these terms:

Martyrdom of Andrew 14

ὦ σταυρὲ μηχάνημα σωτηρίας τοῦ ὑψίστου· ὦ σταυρὲ τρόπαιαν νίκης χριστοῦ κατ' ἐχθρῶν· ὦ σταυρὲ ἐπὶ γῆς φυτευθεὶς καὶ τὸν καρπὸν ἐν οὐρανοῖς ἔχων.[1]

The same mythological-allegorical figures used by Ignatius to describe the functions of the cross are united in Martyr. Andrew 14. The cross is both the "machine of salvation" and the "fruitful tree" which unites those below on earth with God, the Most High. The function of its horizontal arm to gather the world into "one" has a parallel in Ignatius' conception of the cross as the fruitful tree which brings the Christian into union with God.

In Smyrneans 1:1f Christians are the fruit of the tree, drawn into union with Christ by his cross and passion. The new element in Smyr. 1 is that Ignatius relates this conception of the cross as the fruitful tree to a traditional creedal formula. Ignatius has altered and added new material to the creedal formula in order to repudiate the views of his docetic opponents.[2]

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[1] Lipsius-Bonnet, Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha (Leipzig, 1898), II, 1, 55.

[2] Cf. Trall. 9:1-2 for a similar creedal formula heightened for polemical purposes. The passage is followed by a condemnation

In Smyrn. 1:1 Ignatius begins with a Christological statement and then commends the strong faith of the Smyrneans. The Smyrneans are immovable in faith as if they were "nailed to the cross of the Lord Jesus both in flesh and spirit."

Smyrn. 1:2

ἀληθῶς ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου καὶ Ἡρώδου τετράρχου καθηλωμένου ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐν σαρκί, ἀφ' οὗ καρποῦ ἡμεῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ θεομακαρίστου αὐτοῦ πάθους.

The description of the Christian as "fruit" implies that Ignatius conceived of the cross as a tree. The word ξύλου does not occur in the text, but is implied.[1] The expression "Jesus was nailed to a tree under Pontius Pilate" is a variant of the creedal sentence "suffered" (or crucified) under Pontius Pilate (cf. Trall. 9:1, ἀληθῶς ἐδιώχθη ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου, ἀληθῶς ἐσταυρώθη καὶ ἀπέθανεν). Ignatius has added to the creedal statement the adverb ἀληθῶς , the word σάρξ (cf. Smyr. 2:1, 3:1), and the phrase "of its fruit are we from his blessed passion." The phrase "nailed to the tree" must have been in the pre-Ignatian form

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of Docetism; cf. Smyr. 2-3. A creedal type formula in Polycarp Phil. 7:1 is cited against opponents who had a docetic view of Jesus (cf. I Jn. 4:2) and a different view of the cross.

[1] Kirsopp Lake, The Apostolic Fathers (Cambridge, 1952), I, 253. The phrase ἀφ' οὗ καρποῦ requires "tree" (ξύλον) as its subject; cf. Trall. 11:2, δι' οὗ = τοῦ σταυροῦ .

of the confessional symbol (cf. Gal. 3:13; Acts 5:30, 10:39, 13:29; I Pt. 2:24).[1]

There are two parallels which throw light on the terminology of "nailing to a tree." The first is of uncertain date since it occurs as a Christian interpolation in the Sibylline Oracles.

Sib. Oracles 5, 256-259

εἰς δὲ τις ἔσσεται αὖτις ἀπ' αἰθέρος
ἔξοχος ἀνήρ, ὃς παλάμας ἤπλωσεν ἐπὶ
πολυκάρπου, Ἑβραίων ὁ ἄριστος, ὃς
ἠέλιον ποτε στήσει φωνήσας ῥήσει
τε Καλῇ Καὶ χείλεσιν ἀγνοῖς.[2]

The statement that Jesus, "the exalted man," was nailed to a "fruitful" (πολύκαρπος) tree parallels Ignatius' statement in Smyrn. 1:2, except that Ignatius identifies the fruit of the tree as Christians. A variant reading has ἀγλαόκαρπος , "bearing

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[1] The tradition that Jesus was nailed to the cross occurs in the New Testament. The only mention of nails is in Jn. 20:25ff, but the tradition is assumed in Lk. 24:39 (cf. Col. 2:14; Gospel Pt. 6:25).

Philo shows that the phrase "nailing to a tree" can be used as an idiom to mean absolute hopelessness. In De Somnis II, 213, he compares souls dependent on lifeless things to men "crucified and nailed to a tree of hopeless and helpless ignorance."

See J.W. Hewitt, "The Use of Nails in the Crucifixion," HTR, 25 (1932), 29-45. Hewitt has argued that the one main reason why nails have been emphasized by the church and art is in order to fulfill the messianic prophecy of Ps. 21:17, "they pierced my hands and my feet." But the use in Smyr. 1:2, as in Jn. 20:25, is apologetic --- that he suffered in the flesh (cf. Barn. 5:13).

[2] J. Geffcken, Die Oracula Sibyllina (Leipzig, 1902).

beautiful or goodly fruit," in place of πολύκαρπος . The theological conception of the cross as the paradise tree of life stands behind this imagery.

As the parallel in the Gospel of Truth shows, the tradition that "Jesus was nailed to the tree" was reinterpreted in terms of the paradise account in Gnostic circles.[1] In EV 18:24f Jesus is nailed to the tree by the mythical figure "Error" and becomes the "fruit" of the knowledge of the Father. The cross is the paradise tree of knowledge which bestows joy on those who eat its fruit. The passage reflects a Gnostic interpretation of Gen. 2:9 which makes the tree of knowledge the symbol of revelation and knowledge.

In Smyrneans 1:2 Ignatius alludes to the conception of the cross as the fruitful tree of life when he identifies the Christians as the fruit of the cross. The new point which Ignatius has given to this imagery of the fruitful tree is his use of it as a figure of the church. In both Smyrn. 1:2 and Trall. 11 Ignatius passes from the imagery of the cross as the tree to the imagery of the church as the body. Both the figures of the tree and the body express the nature of the unity of believers with Christ.

The cross that lifts "up" the living stones for the heavenly temple, is the rallying point for the saints and believers, Jew and Greek. The phrase ἵνα ἄρῃ σύστημον in Smyrn. 1:2 is an allusion

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[1] See chapter IV, 126.

to Isaiah where σύσσημον is a favorite image and is used repeatedly as a sign or signal, a rallying point on Zion where the signal is raised for the nations (cf. Isa. 5:26, 49:22, 62:10). In Ignatius this σύσσημον is not a previously agreed upon signal (Mk. 14:44) but as in Isaiah it is the rallying point of the peoples. For Ignatius the cross is the instrument of salvation whereby the saints and believers are united with God and with one another.

Summary.

The sharply worded warning in Trall. 11 is aimed at genuine opponents and is not part of a general polemic. But who are the opponents and what is their theological position?

The warning against the opponents in Trall. 11 is cast with paradise allusions which reflect a specific interpretation of Gen. 2-3. Ignatius has picked up certain claims made by his opponents and refutes them by using their own terminology. The type of scriptural interpretation which is reflected is a radical allegorical interpretation of the Genesis paradise account.

In Philad. 8 Ignatius himself reports a debate he had with his opponents over correct scriptural interpretation. According to his own admission when pressed in debate he appealed to the cross and passion rather than to scripture as the "unshakable" foundation of the Christian faith. This is the method of rebuttal that he

employs in Trall. 11. He rejects his opponents interpretation of the Old Testament and refers to their interpretation of the tree of life as evidence of their wrong teaching. The Apocryphon of John and other Gnostic writings from Nag-Hammadi show that an allegorical interpretation of the paradise account like that reflected in Trall. 11 is typically Gnostic.

Ignatius employs the imagery of the tree of life which has fruit that is "incorruptible" to symbolize the cross. While employing this mythological imagery as a symbol of the cross, Ignatius protects the right understanding of the cross from the docetic teaching of his opponents. The historical person Jesus was "nailed to the tree," and "really" suffered and died. The docetic heresy destroyed the significance of the cross as the tree of salvation and eternal life.

The striking aspect of the Trall. 11 passage is that Ignatius has drawn together both Gnostic and Pauline conceptions and combines them in a new form. Ignatius' understanding of the cross is informed by Pauline theology but cast in Gnostic imagery. "Union" with God is the goal of the Christian and the Gnostic, but Ignatius makes it clear that this goal is achieved only through participation in the cross and in the body of Christ, the church. The cross is the center of a divine movement which draws the believer into union with Christ and with one another --- the "machine" of salvation which lifts the

believer "up" to God (Ign. Eph. 9). The Pauline understanding of the cross as the "power" of God for salvation (I Cor. 1:18) is now expressed in Gnostic terms.

In Trall. 11 Ignatius connects Pauline conceptions with Gnostic terminology, but he has done so as the defender of the church against heresy. He has consciously subsumed the cross under the imagery of the tree of life in order to contradict Gnostic speculation concerning the cross and in order to protect the right understanding of the church.

Chapter VI

Myth and Scripture: Conclusions

The examination of the history of interpretation of Gen. 2:9 provides an opportunity to compare the interplay of exegesis and theology in related materials in Jewish, Gnostic and Christian literature. Primary concerns in the above study can be drawn together in the following questions: 1) What part does an exegetical tradition play in the interpretation of Genesis 2:9, 3:22-24? 2) To what extent does an already articulated theological position dictate the exegesis of these Genesis verses? 3) What is the role of myth and scripture? To what extent does the myth of the tree of life absorb other imagery, e.g. the cross?

The various interpretations of the tree of life in Jewish, Gnostic and Christian writings are not entirely independent but rather show a considerable degree of continuity between them. How is this to be explained?

The use of an Exegetical Tradition. In the first place, such a continuity can be explained by the dependence of Gnostic and Christian writings on a Jewish exegetical tradition. There is one distinctive interpretation of the tree of life in Jewish apocalyptic and midrashic writings: the tree of life is an eschatological tree of healing and immortality which is reserved for the righteous

in the new age. This interpretation is altered and modified at points but recurs in the Gnostic tractate "On the Origin of the World" as well as in the Apocalypse of John. The interpretation of the tree of life in these two writings has been informed by a Jewish exegetical tradition. The new points added to the tradition reflect the theology of the two authors; e.g. CW 158:11f, the saints who receive the tree of life at the end of the age are Gnostics who come out of the "plasma" of poverty, i.e. the body; cf. Rev. 2:7, 22:14, where the saints who gain immortality, the tree of life, are those who maintain righteous conduct and who remain faithful to Christ.

The striking feature of this Jewish exegetical tradition is its marked revival of primitive mythological features such as the fragrance and healing power of the tree. Mythological elements drawn into the Jewish tradition are retained in both Gnostic and Christian writings and at times given a new interpretation. In Rev. 22:1f, for example, where the mythical association of the tree. and water of life reappears, the leaves of the tree of life are now for the healing of the "nations."

Philo is not dependent on a Jewish exegetical tradition for his interpretation of the two paradise trees. If he knew of a Jewish eschatological interpretation he rejected it on the grounds that the tree of life must be interpreted allegorically not literally.

But Philo's interpretation of the tree of life does have striking points of similarity with later Gnostic and Christian texts in which the tree is understood allegorically as a symbol of the heavenly redeemer and the mystical goal of unity with the "unknown" Father. The factors which contribute to the apparent continuity between the Philonic and Gnostic interpretations are a similar allegorical method of exegesis and a new non-eschatological mysticism.

Polemical Concerns. There is some evidence that polemical concerns have entered into the use and interpretation of the tree of life. Philo includes a polemical note in Legum Allegoria I 59 against the interpretation of the tree of life as the human heart and similarly lists his objections to other interpretations (QG I 10), but these are insignificant points in his discussion of the Genesis texts.

The emphatic rejection of the tree of life as the cross in the Gospel of Philip is part of a polemic against teachings of the orthodox church.[1] The author of the Gospel of Philip connects the tree of life with chrism, the all encompassing sacrament which was believed to bestow immortality. In Ignatius Trall. 11 the polemic is reversed. The cross is described as a tree with incorruptible fruit, i.e. as a tree of life, in a context where Ignatius warns against the teachings of his Gnostic opponents. Polemical concerns enter into the use of the tree of life in these texts, but are not

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[1] See chapter IV, 124f.

a major factor in giving shape to the myth of the tree of life in Jewish, Gnostic or Christian literature.

It has been suggested that the absence of references to the tree of life in Rabbinical writings may be due to a polemic against speculation on the nature of the tree of life. L. Wallach has argued that the rabbis deliberately rejected midrashic expositions of the tree of life.[1] Wallach has concluded that a polemic in Aboth 3:9 which possibly contains a quotation of I Enoch 24 is a trace of the development that reaches its final formulation in Mishna Hagiga 2:1 where speculation about creation and paradise is strictly prohibited. Wallach's hypothesis would account for the lack of Rabbinic exposition of the tree of life, but the evidence adduced is inconclusive and other factors appear to be more significant.[2]

Theology and Exegesis. Irenaeus criticized the Gnostic use of scripture on two counts: 1) that the Gnostics disregard the order and context of scripture; and 2) that they use scripture only to give support for their own system (AH I.8.1; 9:1).[3] The criticism

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[1] L. Wallach, "A Jewish Polemic Against Gnosticism," JBL, 65 (1946), 393-396.

[2] Other factors of importance are: 1) reaction against apocalyptic speculation --- suggested by the fact that the Tannaitic literature in general ignores apocalyptic writings; 2) prohibition against reading and public use of the "external books" (B.T. Sanhedrin 100b). See G.F. Moore, Judaism (Cambridge, 1927), I, 127, 240.

[3] In a passage intended as a refutation of the errors of

by Irenaeus of the Valentinian use of scripture is applicable on both counts to Gnostic interpretation of Genesis 2:9, 3:22-24. The first part of the criticism is applicable to the interpretation of the same texts in Philo as well as in Jewish apocalyptic and midrashic writings. Christian authors may be open to a similar criticism, but in the texts examined above there is no significant dependence on Genesis.

Gnostic exegetes made the text of Genesis 2-3 support their interpretation of the world and of salvation. A typical device is the free paraphrase of the Genesis text to fit a new context; e.g. OW 168:26-169:13 where Gen. 3:22-24 is paraphrased and reinterpreted as a conflict between Adam and the archons. In Gnostic exegesis the two paradise trees become symbols of this cosmological conflict. While the Genesis text is the source of the imagery and at points of the narrative framework, the Genesis text is completely changed in meaning and dominated by Gnostic theology.

There is a similar interplay of exegesis and theology in Philo's interpretation of Genesis 2:9, but Philo's use of allegory is somewhat different than in Gnostic writings. Philo can reject

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Valentinian exegesis of scripture Irenaeus compared their exegesis to a mosaic of a king which had been rearranged into a picture of a dog or a fox (AH I.8.1). Irenaeus criticizes their allegory as "divination" but does not reject allegory as a method of scriptural exposition. See R.M. Grant, The Letter and the Spirit (London, 1957), 81ff.

certain passages or words which he does not think appropriate to scripture (e.g. Opif. 154) and otherwise uses the scriptural text freely with his allegorical method, but the tone of his allegory is not as harsh and the content not as radical (cf. AJ 55:18ff, 58:16f, with QG I 6, 10).

In contrast with the allegorical interpretation of Philo and Gnostic authors, in Jewish apocalyptic circles the interpretation is typological. The tree of life is taken from the paradise account and is projected into the eschatological future. While various mythological elements are added to the description, the apocalyptic typology does not break down into allegory.

There is a diversity of interpretation of the tree of life in Christian literature. Typologically, the tree of life is interpreted as a symbol of the cross, Jesus himself, and the tree of immortality in the new age. An allegorical interpretation is again prominent in the writings of Clement of Alexandria and Origen as well as in Christian works influenced by Gnosticism (e.g. Justin's Book of Baruch).

<u>Myth and Scripture.</u> The striking mythological colors of the tree of life are not apparent from the Old Testament usage in Genesis or Proverbs, nor from the few references to the tree of life in the New Testament. As the history of interpretation of Gen. 2:9 shows, it is in Jewish apocalyptic and midrashic works, Gnostic literature, and later Christian materials that the tree of life appears in its

more striking and more mythological form.

As we have noted, it is not possible to demonstrate in any detail the myth of the tree of life in the ancient Near East. There is no evidence of a widespread concept of a tree whose fruit bestows immortality. Is there any indication that the sacred tree in the ancient Near East symbolized the deity? Tomb reliefs and other art materials from Egypt suggest such an interpretation. There are tomb paintings which depict the goddess in the branches of the tree pouring water from the tree for the dead.[1]

The Gnostic interpretation of the paradise trees of life and knowledge as symbols of the heavenly revealer is a device used to explain how the revelation of God is mediated to man (e.g. AJ 60: 18ff). But the use of the tree of life, or the vine of life, as a symbol of the heavenly redeemer, Jesus, also represents the revival of a more primitive mythological dimension of the tree. The tree of life again becomes a symbol of the deity and represents the source of life.

The use of the tree of life as a symbol of the cross resulted in the addition of new meanings to both the cross and the tree of life. In the Syriac "Cave of Treasures" it is explained that the cross is the veritable tree of life and thus it was fixed in the

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[1] See "Mythological Background," 14.

middle of the earth just as the tree of life was planted in the midst of paradise.[1] The myth of the tree of life informed the imagery of the cross (e.g. Ign. Trall. 11) as well as absorbed new elements from the imagery and theology of the cross. In a Christian interpretation in Vita Adae et Evae 40-42 the tree of life is reinterpreted as the "tree of mercy" in paradise to which Christ the king will lead Adam when five thousand five hundred years have passed.

New elements were drawn into the myth of the tree of life especially where it was associated with specific rites such as the Gnostic sacrament of chrism and the Christian Eucharist. The cultic role of the tree of life does not appear in the Biblical references, but becomes a factor in Gnostic and later Christian traditions.

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[1] E.A. Wallis Budge, The Book of the Cave of Treasures (London, 1927), 63.

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